The OCEAN WIRELESS BOYS of the ICEBERG PATROL

CAPT. WILBUR LAWTON

George Wesley

Amidst a glare of red flame and lurid smoke, the young operator staggered backward.—*Page* 103.

THE OCEAN WIRELESS BOYS

OF THE

ICE-BERG PATROL

BY

CAPTAIN WILBUR LAWTON

AUTHOR OF "THE BOY AVIATORS' SERIES," "THE DREADNOUGHT BOYS' SERIES," "THE OCEAN WIRELESS BOYS ON THE ATLANTIC," "THE OCEAN WIRELESS BOYS AND THE LOST LINER"

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The Ocean Wireless Boys of the Iceberg Patrol.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE OCEAN TRAIL.

The big, high-sided *Cambodian,* in ballast, that is, carrying no cargo, and outward bound from New York for Rotterdam, was shouldering through the green seas that came racing to meet her. The *Cambodian* was a brand new freighter of the big shipping combine controlled by Jacob Jukes, and as just then no better berth had been offered, Jack Ready found himself occupying her wireless room getting the newly installed radio apparatus in shape and tuned up for effective service.

As he worked over a refractory detector Jack, although normally of a cheerful disposition, felt

a strong inclination to grumble at his present berth. He had been hoping for a chance at the wireless operator job on board the *Empire State,* the newest and greatest of the Jukes trans-Atlantic liners. But at the last moment he had been passed over and another operator appointed on the ground of seniority.

But Jack's gloomy mood did not last long. As usual, the stimulus of work soon caused the clouds to dissolve, and by the time he had the detector adjusted, he was humming cheerfully. As he looked up from his completed job, a ruddy-faced, cheery-looking lad about two years older than Jack, who was eighteen, stuck his head in at the door of the wireless-room which, besides the apparatus, contained Jack's bunk, a picture of the boy's dead mother hanging at its head, and the desk at which he made out his reports.

"Hello there," hailed Jack, as Billy Raynor appeared, "going off watch?"

"Well, don't I look it, with this fine old coat

of grime on my hide?" laughed Jack's chum, now promoted to the post of second engineer on the new freighter.

"Thought when you got to be second you were just going to loll around with your hands in your pockets and give orders," commented Jack.

"Um, so did I," rejoined Raynor with a rather wry grin, "but, as you see, it didn't just work out that way. By-the-way, I thought you were going to be the dandy, brass-buttoned wireless hero on a passenger packet this trip."

It was Jack's turn to give a rueful smile and he rejoined, "so did I."

"Old Jukes was mighty nice about it though," he explained. "I'm getting the same pay as I would on a liner and then, too, that check for that South American business came in mighty handy, so that, financially, I'm not kicking. But I do want to get ahead in my work."

"Well, old Jukes ought to shove you right along," declared Raynor, coming in and planting

his overalled form in a chair by the desk. "You've sure done a lot for him, starting in by saving his daughter, and——"

"Say, shut up, will you!" sputtered Jack, turning red. "I don't want any favoritism for anything I may or may not have done. That isn't it. I just want to get right ahead in the wireless game."

"And so you are, so far as I can see," replied Raynor. "Incidentally, how's the portable set coming along?"

He referred to Jack's pet hobby, an invention over which he had worked during all his spare time, afloat and ashore, for months. It was a portable wireless set in which weight and complexity had been cut to the bone. Jack had managed to reduce the weight by degrees till at last he had produced what he believed would prove a practicable device for use in the field, which weighed a trifle under fifty pounds, and could be carried over the operator's shoulder in a satchel.

In reply to young Raynor's question, Jack opened a closet and produced a set of instruments of exquisite finish. Attached to them was a neat coil of copper wire and, strapped to the base that supported the whole, was a flat package of cloth and bamboo sticks.

"What's that jigger underneath?" asked Raynor, referring to the latter bit of apparatus.

"That's a box kite," explained Jack.

"A box kite? What in the world do you want with that?"

"Well, you can't send out or receive messages without aërials, can you?" parried Jack.

"No, but you could hitch your aërial wires to a tree or——"

"All right, Mr. Smarty, but just suppose that you are in a country where there are no trees."

"Oh, I see," exclaimed Raynor, "in that case you'd do a little kite flying."

"That's the idea exactly," responded Jack.

"Have you tested it yet?" inquired Raynor.

"Up to 150 miles. It works splendidly. I'm going to gear up my hand-generator higher so as to produce a stronger alternating current, however. Then I think I'll get better results."

Clang-g-g-g-g-g-g-g!

A gong above Jack's head sounded clamorously. This gong was another of the boy's inventions. By means of a silicon detector ingeniously connected, a wireless wave striking the antennæ of the *Cambodian's* apparatus instantly sounded the gong. In this way Jack had done with a lot of tiresome waiting for calls with his receivers clamped to his head.

"Something doing?" asked Raynor, as Jack sprang from the chair he had been sitting on and seated himself in front of the wireless key.

"I guess it's nothing much," was the reply, "*Siasconset* maybe, or *Race.*"

But a moment later the expression of the young operator's face grew concentrated. His hand

reached out for a pencil and he began to scribble on his transcription pad the words that came pulsing against his ears like waves out of a vast sea of space.

"Steamer *Athenia* (Br.) reports,"—thus Jack wrote—"Along parallel of 45.06 saw ice as follows:—Grindstone, one mile of ice inshore. Scatari, close-packed ice inshore. Cape Ray, loose strings distant. Money Point, heavy close-packed ice inshore. Cape Race, several small strings loose ice drifting S. W."

Raynor had been peering over Jack's shoulder as the boy wrote. When he ceased, the young engineer was full of eager questions. Jack flashed out an answer to the *Athenia* and then "grounded" his instrument.

"Well, that's to be expected in April," was his comment. "I guess we'll get a lot more of such reports before long."

"Think we'll run into any bergs?" asked Raynor rather anxiously.

"Don't get nervous," laughed Jack, "the iceberg patrol is on the lookout for those. I'm surprised they haven't 'tapped-in' yet with some information. That's the service for you, old man, the iceberg patrol. Think of the lives you have a chance to save and—and—but I've got to be off with this message to the old man."

Jack hurried from the cabin, and forwarded his message to Captain Briggs on the bridge. Raynor followed with more deliberation and made for his own cabin and soap and water. As he removed the grime of the engine-room, he mused on the subject of icebergs. Not many weeks before a big liner had blundered at night into a huge floating continent of ice and had sunk, with a terrible toll of lives and suffering.

"If a big old liner like that couldn't stand one wallop from an iceberg what chance would the *Cambodian* stand?" he wondered. "Still, as

Jack said, since the accident they've had a regular iceberg patrol to send out warnings by wireless of any bergs that happen to be in the vicinity. I wouldn't mind seeing a berg though, if it wasn't at too close range. Wonder if I ever will?"

Had the young engineer possessed the gift of second sight, he would have been able to foresee that in the immediate future he was destined to come into closer contact with icebergs than he would have dreamed possible, and also that the entire current of his life was to be changed by a series of unlooked for and astonishing happenings.

CHAPTER II.

ON THE LOOKOUT FOR ICE.

With the dropping of the sun it fell bitter cold. The sea heaved in a leaden, lightless swell which the forefoot of the *Cambodian,* as she drove along, broke into spuming spray. The officers donned their heavy bridge coats. The crew, or that portion of it which had the watch on deck, wrapped up as warmly as they could in the scanty garments they possessed.

When Jack opened his cabin to go below to his evening meal, a slight flurry of snow struck him in the face.

"Goodness!" thought the boy, "here's a change, and when we left New York folks were thinking about Coney Island and putting their winter coats in moth-balls."

The captain was the only other occupant of

the dining-room, from which opened the officers cabins, when Jack went below. The boy noticed that Captain Briggs' face was rather flushed, and his eyes were very bright as he took his seat. The captain had finished eating but before he left the room he came to Jack's side and, leaning over him, asked in a rather thick voice, if there had been any more reports on icebergs. Jack replied in the negative.

"Tha's aw' ri' then," said the captain in a loud, boastful voice, whose tones were thick. "Donner be 'fraid icebergs with Cap'n Briggs on board. I'm an old sea-going walrus, I am. I jes go ri' through 'em, yes, sir, jes like knife goin' thro' cheese. Thas me."

He swaggered out of the cabin with his scarlet face grinning. Jack's eyes followed him as the captain rather staggeringly ascended the companionway.

"I don't know much about such things," thought the boy, while a serious look came over

his face, "but it seems to me that Captain Briggs is under the influence of liquor. That's a bad thing. Liquor is bad at all times but it's more dangerous at sea than anywhere else."

He finished his meal hastily and returned to his cabin to find his "wireless bell" ringing furiously. Jack lost no time in getting to work. He found that the U. S. revenue cutter *Seneca,* one of the craft detailed by Uncle Sam to the iceberg patrol, was flashing out signals of warning. Jack got the operator to repeat them when half a dozen or more other steamers had picked them up.

The *Seneca's* operator was in a bad mood at this.

"Confound you fellows," he flashed through space, "why don't you pay attention and get the message from the jump?"

"I was eating supper," Jack replied contritely.

"I haven't had a chance to eat yet, and I'm so hungry I could gobble a boiler-plate pie,"

growled the government man. "This is a dog's life."

"I'd trade you jobs," flashed Jack, but the other ignored this and began thundering out his message concerning the white terrors of the north.

"Ready?" he flashed.

"Fire away!" sparked crackingly from Jack's key. Far above him, in the night, the aërials flashed and snapped.

"*Seneca,* U. S. Iceberg Patrol. Str. *Montrose* reports from 50:47 on parallel 42, sighted three bergs, two growlers, April 6th, moving S.W. Barometer 30. Temperature 36. Overcast. Wind N.W. About 18 miles per hour.

"April 7th, 2:00 a. m., big berg, lat. 42.34, long. 48.15. Growler four miles north-west. Both moving south."

"That's all. Now I'll get a chance to stow some grub—maybe," grumpily concluded the report. Jack did not jot down these latter words.

As he made his way forward with his report,

the young wireless man noticed that the fog was beginning to rise from the sea in long, wavering wreaths. They looked ghostlike under the stars. In the light breeze they danced a sort of witches' dance. It looked as if the sea was a boiling expanse with whirling banners of steam rising from it. Even as Jack hurried forward he saw that the banners were closing in to form a solid web of mist.

The *Cambodian* was ploughing steadily forward. From her single big funnel, black with a broad white band, inky smoke was pouring out a volume that showed there was to be no niggardly saving of coal on the present voyage. In fact, before sailing, Jack had heard that she represented a new type of fast freighter, and that her maiden voyage would be utilized as an opportunity of trying her out thoroughly.

Above the young operator hung the spider-web strands of the antennæ. Practiced operator as he was, Jack had never quite lost his won-

der at the often recurring thought that from those slender copper cables, seemingly inert, he could, by the pressure and release of a key, send out a message, in time of danger, that would bring a score of ships hastening to the stricken one. It was characteristic of the boy that close acquaintance with the wireless had not in the least dimmed his enthusiasm and reverence for its marvels.

On the bridge were three figures, shrouded in heavy coats. They were the captain, chief officer, and second officer. From one end of the bridge a seaman was constantly casting overboard a canvas bucket attached to a rope and hauling it in board again. Each time he brought the bucket to the group of officers, one of whom thrust a thermometer into it and then read off the temperature of the water.

"Dropped ten degrees, by Neptune!" Captain Briggs exclaimed thickly as Jack came up. He

had just finished scrutinizing the thermometer under the light of a hooded lantern.

"Ten degrees, sir!" cried Mr. Mulliner, the first officer.

"That's what. We ought to smell ice before long," was the reply, with a loud, hilarious laugh.

CHAPTER III.

A NARROW ESCAPE.

"It's too bad. The captain has certainly been drinking," mused Jack to himself as he stood at attention and presented the dispatch he had just copied.

"What's this?" demanded the captain, regarding him with bloodshot eyes that blinked suspiciously.

"Report from the *Seneca,* sir. Bergs in the vicinity," spoke up Jack.

"Report from the *Seneca,* eh?" muttered Captain Briggs muzzily. "Well I know as well as they do there are bergs ahead. Let's see what it's all about."

He took the message and scanned it under the light of the lantern by which he had been taking thermometer readings. His hand shook and

he called first officer Mulliner to read the message to him. Mulliner repeated it in a grave voice.

"Hadn't we better slow down, sir?" he asked.

"Slow down? What for?" blustered the flushed captain.

"Why, sir, the temperature of the water and then this dispatch all go to show that we are nearing ice-fields, maybe growlers and bergs. We are making fully eighteen knots now and——"

"We'll continue to do so," exclaimed the captain. "I've sailed these seas for a good many more years than you've been on earth, Mr. Mulliner."

"That may all be, sir," rejoined the young officer anxiously, "but at this speed——"

"At this speed we'll head 'em off according to my calculations," declared the captain. "If we slowed down we'd land in the middle of 'em. If we keep full speed ahead, we'll pass to the south of 'em."

"Then you mean to race them, sir?"

"That's what. If that's what you want to call it. Now get to your duty, Mr. Mulliner," added the captain in sharp tones, as if he felt he had been too lenient even to argue with his subordinate. Mr. Mulliner, muttering something about "suicidal," turned away.

"Any orders, sir?" asked Jack, when he was alone with the captain.

Captain Briggs shook his head. He was a seaman of the old school and did not place much faith in wireless.

"Just stick at your instruments," he said, "but if there's bergs about the look-out, bet my nose 'ull pick 'em up ahead of any fool wireless contraption."

Jack made his way aft, burning with indignation. Here was a fine, new ship, being driven at top speed toward the greatest peril a seaman can encounter, at the whim of a man who had been drinking. But there was nothing to be

done, as Jack reflected with a sense of speechless anger. Aboard ship the captain, no matter how insane his orders may appear, is absolute czar of the situation. His word is law. He can hang or imprison, for mutiny, anyone who dares to question his orders.

The young wireless operator paused, before he reëntered his snug cabin with its shining instruments, to lean over the rail and gaze out into the night. The mist had thickened now. It struck at his face like clammy fingers. The night was quite silent but for the vague hum of the engines far below him, and the hiss and roar of the sea as the hulk of the *Cambodian* was driven through it.

Ahead it was almost impossible to see anything but a dense, black pall that might hide anything. Dimly through the mist curtains, Jack could make out the figure of the look-out in the crow's nest. Occasionally he could catch his hoarse shout of "All's well" and an answer,

booming through the smother, from the bridge.

Suddenly the whistle began sounding. At regular half minute intervals it shrieked hoarsely. Jack knew what they were doing. If bergs were in the vicinity, in the intervals of silence between blasts, an echo would be flung back.

"Pshaw, that's a hap-hazard way of detecting bergs at best," muttered Jack to himself.

But he found himself listening with strained ears to catch the slightest sound of an echo after each clamorous yammer of the big siren. He fell to musing of the night on the *Ajax* when the big berg had loomed up before them.

Details of that night were told in the first volume of the Ocean Wireless Series, which was called "The Ocean Wireless Boys on the Atlantic." This volume introduced Jack, his strange dwelling place, and his odd relative, Cap'n Toby Ready, to our readers. We found Jack, pretty well disheartened in his ambition to become a wireless operator, on his way home among the

shipping to the queer old derelict craft where he lived with his uncle Toby, the latter a purveyor of vegetable drugs and medicine, to old and superannuated skippers.

Seeing a crowd on a dock, Jack went to find out what was the matter. He soon discovered that the young daughter of Jacob Jukes, the millionaire head of the great shipping combine, had strayed from her father, who was visiting a great "oil-tanker" moored there, and had tumbled overboard.

Jack leaped from the dock, while the others stood paralyzed with helplessness, and saved the child in the nick of time. This won him Mr. Jukes' extravagant gratitude. He wanted to give Jack money. But all Jack wanted was a job as wireless operator on the big "oil-tanker," the *Ajax*. He got it. Mr. Jukes would have given him the ship had he asked for it. But the millionaire was autocratic. After Jack's first voyage he wanted the lad to give up the sea and, at

a big salary, become the friend and companion of the millionaire's son, Tom, a sickly lad. This by no means suited Jack and he and the millionaire quarreled.

But Jack forged steadily ahead in his chosen profession. On his first voyage, by a clever wireless trick, he brought confusion on a gang of tobacco smugglers and set all their plans at naught. For this brave act he almost paid with his life. But all came out well, and on a homeward voyage from Antwerp he was able, once more with the aid of the wireless, to unite Mr. Jukes and his son, Tom, who had become separated when the millionaire's yacht caught fire and burned to the water-line at sea.

In the next volume, which was called "The Ocean Wireless Boys and the Lost Liner," Jack found himself the natty chief wireless man of the crack West Indian liner, *Tropic Queen,* one of the finest passenger craft plying those waters. Jack and his assistant, a youth named Sam Smal-

ley, found themselves involved in an intrigue almost at once. A mysterious wireless code and a plot to steal papers involving the Panama Canal formed its chief features.

In trying to fight the ring of rascals, against whom he found himself pitted, Jack was drugged in the Island of Jamaica and cast into an inaccessible dungeon—part of an old Spanish castle called The Lion's Mouth. By wonderful ingenuity and pluck he escaped from the fate planned for him.

Later a safe was blown open on the *Tropic Queen* and the Panama papers were stolen.

But Jack's quick work at the wireless key soon summoned Uncle Sam's speediest battleships and cruisers to an ocean wide search for the yacht, on board which was the gang that had stolen the papers. They were recovered eventually by Jack and handed over to the rightful owner. But not long after the *Tropic Queen* was caught in a hurricane and cast on an island.

All seemed lost, for a huge tidal wave overwhelmed the wreck to which Jack and Sam had swum out, leaving the others ashore. But eventually the two boys reached land and rejoined the other castaways. The message that Jack had sent out before the convulsion of nature ended, the lost liner had reached other crafts, however, and all were rescued safely. Jack and Sam each received substantial rewards for their services.

Jack was turning out of the night to reënter his cabin when Raynor came along. He was going on watch again.

"What news?" he asked, as he paused near Jack.

"Nothing much, except that there is ice ahead."

"Bergs?"

"Yes, and growlers too, and field ice maybe. The *Seneca* reports it."

Raynor looked about him in a puzzled way.

"But we haven't slowed down," he said at length.

"That's just it. Captain Briggs is a drinking man. He is drinking to-night and reckless. He means to keep right on this way."

"Why, that's madness. At any minute——"

"That's just what Mr. Mulliner says—. But what are we going to do? You know as well as I do that the skipper's word is law at sea."

Raynor perched himself on the rail, balancing there high above the water, a favorite position with him.

"I wish you'd brace your legs when you do that," remarked Jack. "If there was a sudden lurch or anything you'd go right overboard, and nothing could save you. I've spoken to you a dozen times about it and——"

"I know you have, you croaking old land-lubber," laughed Raynor, "it's alright. As for danger, if you could see me lying in the crank-pit, with the big steel throws smashing round within half an inch of my nose I guess you'd be worried then."

"No, I wouldn't, because that's your business and you know what you're doing," responded Jack, "but balancing like that's just pure foolhardiness."

"So there's ice ahead?" said Raynor, ignoring Jack's protest.

"That's the report. They're testing the temperature of the water on the bridge. It's falling all the time."

"Well, what does that amiable maniac Briggs think he's going to do, knock a berg out of his way if he hits it?"

"No; he figures in his muddled brain that by keeping up full speed he can pass to the south of the path of the bergs. In other words, he's racing them."

"And if he loses the race there'll be a most almighty smash-up."

"That's it. I—— What in the name of time is that?"

Jack broke off in an alarmed voice. Hoarsely,

through the night, had come the frightened cry of the man in the crow's nest.

"For the Lord's sake back her!"

"What's up?" was shouted from the bridge.

"It's ice. Ice dead ahead! To the port to starboard!"

With startled eyes and drumming pulses Jack stared forward.

Ghostlike, gigantic and looming white in the darkness a monolithic tower overhung, as it seemed, the *Cambodian's* bow.

"Full speed astern!" came the voice of Mulliner, shrill with alarm, and then the hoarse shout of Captain Briggs.

"No, confound you. Ahead! D'ye hear me—ahead!"

And then came a shout to the wheelman.

"Hard over! Hard over for your life!"

The *Cambodian,* at unreduced speed, swung off her course. A shivering shock ran through her steel frame as she grazed the giant berg and

then—swung off, hardly scratched. Jack felt a quick bound of his heart. In spite of his dissipation, Captain Briggs had shown he knew how to handle the emergency. That quick order of full speed ahead, and the swift shifting of the wheel had enabled the *Cambodian* to save her life.

"Say, Raynor, old man!" cried the boy enthusiastically, while the shouldering form of the berg grew dim, a passed menace, and the raucous shouts of the crew rose up to him, "say Raynor, I'll take back what I said about Captain Briggs. T—why don't you answer?"

Jack turned swiftly. Then he stiffened with alarm. The place where his chum had been perched upon the rail was vacant. Raynor was gone. For a brief instant Jack was silent from the shock. Then his voice rang out in tones of vibrant fear.

"Man overboard!" he cried, running forward stumblingly, "man overboard!"

CHAPTER IV.

MAN OVERBOARD!

Simultaneously with the shivering shock of the impact with the iceberg, Billy Raynor felt himself lose his balance.

He grasped frantically at the air as he fell backward. But the next moment, too alarmed to cry out, he was himself tumbling through space. Then came the sharp shock and the icy sensation of his immersion as he struck the water.

He came to the surface, his lungs full of brine and his ears roaring as if an express train had been rushing past them. He gasped for breath and spat the salt water out. Far above him he saw for a flash the black, high hull of the *Cambodian*. He saw her lights. For a brief instant he could hear shouts.

And then the ship had passed by. An instant

later she had vanished from the castaway lad's sight.

"Help!" yelled Raynor, finding his voice at last. He sent the cry echoing and volleying across the dark water again and again. But there was no response.

A chill of deadly fear, not altogether born of the icy water, struck in at his heart. He was alone on the Atlantic. Nothing but his own efforts would keep him above the water very long. And weighted as he was by his water-soaked clothes, he felt his strength ebbing every moment.

"Great heavens," he moaned to himself, "is this to be the end? Am I doomed to end my life here in the ocean with nobody to know of my fate?"

He cast his eyes upward. Then he almost gave a shout of relief. Towering above him was a mighty white wall.

It was the iceberg to which he owed his predicament.

It has been said that drowning men will clutch at straws. This may, or may not, be true, but certain it is that to Billy Raynor, almost exhausted by his long fight in the chilly water, the iceberg appeared a haven of refuge. Like most of such huge ice structures it was very irregular in shape.

Near him was a spot at which a narrow shelf stretched out close to the water's edge. Raynor struck out for it and drew himself upon the ledge of ice. Then, for a time, he lay there supine, too weak to even move.

He was fearfully cold. His teeth chattered and he felt as if his flesh must be blue. But at least he had saved his life for the time being. He knew that ten minutes more in the water would have finished him. Raynor sat up and took stock of the situation.

He was afloat on an iceberg, a precarious

enough situation surely. His momentary feeling of exultation at having found a safe refuge began to fade. He felt a wave of fear pass over him. He shouted with all his might, cupping his hands and casting his voice in the direction he thought the *Cambodian* had vanished. But had he known it he was sending his appeals in altogether the wrong quarter, for the iceberg was slowly revolving as it lumbered its way south.

"This won't do. I mustn't give way," thought the lad, pluckily striving to overcome his depressing fears.

He felt in his pockets. The tin box in which he was carrying down his midnight lunch for consumption in the *Cambodian's* engine room was still there.

"That's lucky," thought Raynor, and was still more pleased when he found that its contents, sandwiches and a piece of pie, were not much damaged by water. He began to eat ravenously,

in the meantime turning his dilemma over and over in his mind.

"I'm in the steamer track anyhow," he thought. "I'm bound to be sighted and picked up before long, even if the *Cambodian* isn't standing by and waiting for morning."

But then came the disquieting thought that the iceberg was drifting. He had no means of knowing how fast. But by daylight it might be far south of the steamer track, which is as well marked as any land road, and rarely deviated from by any vessels except sailing craft.

"And just think how little things can grow into big ones," mused the lad, as he munched his scanty store. "Jack told me not to balance on the rail. If I'd taken his advice instead of laughing at it I wouldn't be here. I'd be on board the *Cambodian.* Jove though—" he broke off suddenly, as a new thought struck him,—"maybe the *Cambodian* was badly ripped by the collision. She may have sunk—and Jack——"

He buried his face in his hands, too much unnerved by all that he had gone through to think any longer. By degrees he regained possession of his faculties, however. He fell once more to revolving his plight. He need not fear death from thirst for he had his knife and could chip off fragments of ice and let them melt in his mouth when he felt so inclined. Food, though, was another consideration. He resolutely set aside two sandwiches and half his wedge of pie for emergencies.

It was still dark and misty and he could see little but the blackly heaving water at his feet and the towering white walls of the berg above him. Suddenly, however, he became aware of a sound, a strange sound to hear in his present position.

It was the sound of a footfall, furtive and cautious!

The blood flew poundingly to the boy's pulses.

He sprang erect, knife in hand. What he might be called upon to face he did not know.

But he knew he was not alone on the iceberg.

His heart beat thick and hot and then seemed to stop. Advancing onward, from round a shoulder of ice which reached down to the shelf on which he had found refuge, was a tall white form.

It resembled nothing that the boy had ever seen. As if in a nightmare he stood there fixed as a graven image, staring at it with starting eyes as it slowly approached him.

CHAPTER V.

IMPRISONED.

Captain Briggs looked blankly at Jack as the frightened boy came forward by leaps and bounds to the bridge, shouting "Man overboard," a cry which was speedily taken up and echoed from end to end of the ship.

"Whasser marrer?" demanded the captain, seizing the excited boy's shoulder.

Jack pointed back into the obscurity. His voice was choked with emotion.

"It's Raynor,—Billy Raynor, second assistant engineer, sir. He fell overboard when we bumped that berg."

"He did, eh?" repeated the captain thickly, staring stupidly at Jack. "Well, he's in Davy Jones locker by this time you may depend upon that."

For a moment Jack stood stupefied. Then he broke out angrily, utterly forgetting all discipline.

"Aren't you lowering a boat? Why don't you order one away? Raynor's drowning back there."

"Look here, my lad, you're excited," said the captain in more collected, sober tones, "I'm not going to lay my ship to among these icebergs on the chance,—it's one in ten thousand,—of saving him. A boat couldn't live among that field ice. It would be crushed in a jiffy."

"Then you're going to hold on your course without an effort to save him—? You're going to abandon him like a coward?" shouted Jack, beside himself.

"Nuzzing to be done," mumbled the captain, relapsing again, "on your course, Mr. Mulliner."

But Jack was too far enraged to stand this. He sprang forward and grasped the first officer's sleeve.

"Mr. Mulliner, sir, you won't see this cowardly thing done? You won't leave that poor lad back there without a chance for his life?"

"I can't help it, my boy, captain's orders, sorry," and the officer stepped into the wheelhouse to give the steersman his orders.

"It's murder," shouted Jack, "I'll see that you suffer for it, Captain Briggs. It's a black crime, it's the work of a coward, it's——"

A heavy hand fell on his shoulder. It was Captain Briggs. His face was aflame with indignation.

"Wadderyer mean, you young jackanapes," he roared, beside himself with anger and the potations he had drunk, "Jenks, Andrews!"

The seamen who had been heaving the bucket stepped up. They stood waiting.

"Bind this young turkey cock hand and foot and lock him in his cabin," thundered Captain Briggs, "he's guilty of mutiny on the high seas,

by Neptune. To-morrow I'll see if there's not a pair of irons on board that will fit him."

"Do you mean that I am under arrest, captain?" stammered Jack, completely taken aback.

"I do, yes, sir, and it may go hard with you if I don't change my mind," yelled the captain furiously. "Take him away, you men, and I'll hold you responsible for him."

Jack saw red for a minute. He made a leap for the captain but the two sailors caught him.

"Easy there, young feller, easy," one of them whispered, "we've no more use for him than you have, but going on this way ain't goin' ter get yer anything. Better come quietly."

With a sigh that was half a sob Jack submitted to be bound and then half carried, half dragged, to his cabin. He heard the key turned in the lock. He was a prisoner. A wild idea crossed his mind of flashing out by wireless an account of his plight and the captain's drunkenness.

The next instant it dawned upon him that he

was powerless. He was a prisoner, bound hand and foot like a criminal. And where was Raynor? Dead, beyond the possibility of a doubt. He could not have lived more than a few moments in that icy sea. Jack groaned aloud in anguish as he strained and writhed at his bonds. His plight was quite forgotten in his anxiety over Raynor's fate.

"Hist!"

The sibilant sound of a man's voice demanding attention broke in on Jack's sad reverie at this juncture. It came from a circular grating, made for ventilation in the door of the cabin. Jack looked up and saw the face of one of the seamen looking in at him. The hard lines of the mariner's countenance were illumined by the electric light within the cabin.

"Well, what's the matter?" demanded Jack, rather petulantly.

The man, it was the one who had been ad-

dressed as Andrews by Captain Briggs, began speaking rapidly and cautiously.

"This here Captain Briggs," he began, "we don't like him no more than you do. I've sailed with him before. There's a plot on foot to——"

The heavy footsteps of an officer approaching caused the face to vanish and the voice to cease. Outside, Jack recognized Mr. Mulliner's voice giving an order.

"Andrews, you can get forward, you too Jenks. There's no need to stand on guard here. Give me the key."

Jack listened and heard the men clump off in one direction. Then he heard the sound of Mr. Mulliner's footsteps die out. He was left to his own reflections once more. His mind dwelt on the mysterious hint dropped by Andrews. "There's a plot on foot——" the man had said. Jack wondered to himself if there was a mutiny brooding on board the *Cambodian.* There had been a seaman's strike in New York when she

sailed, and the crew was made up of all sorts of water-front riff-raff. Some of them were desperate-looking characters.

The young captive struggled with his ropes as these thoughts ran through his mind. But the knots had been tied by seamen, and try as he would he could not loosen them. The bonds began to impede his circulation and grow painful in the extreme.

"Well, I suppose I'll have to reconcile myself to my fate till morning," said Jack to himself resignedly. "Something tells me that this voyage is going to turn out to be not quite so tame as I thought. From what that fellow Andrews said, mutiny is afoot among the crew, and we are not yet forty-eight hours out of port."

His reflections were startlingly interrupted.

The sharp crack of a revolver split the night from somewhere forward. Then came hoarse shouts and the sound of trampling feet.

"The trouble has started already!" exclaimed Jack, rising in his bunk despite the cruel pain the sudden movement gave his bound limbs.

CHAPTER VI.

MAROONED ON AN ICE-BERG.

"Am I going crazy?"

Raynor, marooned on the drifting berg, passed a hand across his eyes. The white form that had menaced him with he knew not what peril a minute before had vanished as suddenly as it had appeared. Badly overwrought, the lad stood staring at the place where he had seen it.

"This won't do," he said to himself, "I mustn't lose my nerve and get to seeing things."

With an effort he braced up his faculties. With infinite patience he waited for daylight. At last, after what seemed years, the east began to flush with the dawn. Soon a gray light was diffused over the sea, the fog had lifted and the horizon could be seen in every quarter.

Raynor gave a groan, despite his determina-

tion not to give way, as he gazed about him. The sea was empty. The berg, surrounded by a small belt of floating ice, was the only object on the surface of the waters. Not even a streak of smoke on the sky showed the vicinity of steamers.

"I must have drifted right off the ocean track in the night," muttered Raynor. "It's a million chances to one now if I ever get picked up."

The thought overwhelmed even his sturdy determination to bear up. He sank down on the berg utterly unnerved. How long he sat there with his head between his hands in an attitude of abject despair he did not know.

But he was aroused by a sound of snuffling not far from him. He looked up and gave a shout of terror as he did so.

Eyeing him from a slight acclivity of the berg not a hundred feet away, was an immense polar bear!

Like a flash he realized that this was the mys-

terious visitant of the night, the other occupant of the drifting berg. The creature, as is not uncommonly the case, must have been trapped on the berg when it broke loose from the ice fields of the north.

The bear stood perfectly still except for a wagging motion of its long, narrow, almost snake-like, head. Had the circumstances been different Raynor could have found it in his mind to admire the snow white king of the polar regions. But now his emotions were very different. The bear was no doubt famished, and he was unarmed, except for his knife, which would not be much more use than a darning needle against such an antagonist.

Cold as it was the sweat broke out on the lad's brow as he realized his position. He stood immovable, staring at the white bear. The great creature, too, appeared to be pondering its next move. Behind Raynor the berg rose to its summit in a series of ledges. Anxious to place as

great a distance as possible between himself and the wild beast, the young engineer began to climb upward.

The bear did not follow till he had clambered some distance up the icy walls.

Then it extended its long neck, and opening its mouth emitted an appalling roar. Raynor's blood ran cold as he saw it shuffle deliberately from the ledge where it had been eyeing him and begin to climb up after him.

"I've not a chance on earth," he groaned.

He looked down at the white monster as it clumsily clambered up toward him. Its movements were quite deliberate, as though the creature knew that the lad could not escape by any possibility. Saliva dribbled from its red fangs as it mounted steadily and Raynor could glimpse its sharp white teeth.

He felt his scalp tighten with fear and kept back a shout of terror only by a supreme effort of will power. The distance that had at first

Raymond could almost feel its hot breath.—*Page* 53.

separated the lad and his savage foe was now diminished from feet to inches. In a few seconds more they would be face to face and then——?

In a frenzy of alarm Raynor seized his tin lunch box from his pocket and hurled it with all his force in the face of the bear. One of the sharp corners struck it fairly on the nose and brought the blood. But it did not stop the creature's progress.

On the contrary, it enraged it. Shaking its head from the pain, the bear emitted a thunderous roar of rage and scrambled up faster than ever. The scrape of its claws, like steel chisels, against the ice, was horribly suggestive. Raynor could almost feel its hot breath, when something entirely unexpected happened.

A sudden shift to get further away from the bear resulted in the lad losing his footing on the steep and slippery surface of the berg.

Like a stone from a sling he shot down the glassy side with the speed of the wind. Ahead

of him was green water but he was powerless to check himself.

Splash! The lad slid into the water, which closed over him in a flash. But in a second he was on the surface again and striking out. Not far from him was a large floe, one of the numerous ones that belted the big berg. With some difficulty he clambered upon this. He had hardly gained its surface when a roar made him look round. The polar bear was not going to be cheated of its prey in that way.

To his horror, Raynor saw the hunger-maddened creature leaping toward him across the ice floes. In a few minutes it would be upon him. Those cruel jaws would be crushing and tearing his flesh. The lad turned sick and faint and reeled as if about to fall. But he was brought sharply back to his senses.

Bang!

A rifle cracked and the bear, in a pool of crimson, sank on the floe it was about to leap from.

The next instant the phenomenon was explained. Not far off lay a handsome, yacht-like looking schooner with her sails aback.

The rifle shot that had saved Raynor's life had been fired from her deck. He could see the marksman, a tall, bearded fellow, lowering his rifle on which the light glinted.

Then Raynor saw a boat being lowered from the stern davits. Four oarsmen made the light craft fairly skim over the waves toward him. In the stern sheets of the boat the man who had fired the lucky shot stood up handling the tiller. The light gleamed in his great bronze beard and made it shine like copper. His huge build and his attitude at the helm made him look like a Viking of old.

But of all this Raynor, for the time being, had only a hazy impression. Vague lights swam and danced before his eyes in a mad merry-go-round and a sound like the roar of a thousand waterfalls drilled in his ears. Then everything went out in a great wave of darkness.

CHAPTER VII.

JACK SAVES THE CAPTAIN.

"Well, young man, I guess you won't be sorry to get those ropes off."

Jack looked up from the uneasy slumber into which he had fallen to find Chief Officer Mulliner looking down rather quizzically at him. His ankles and wrists felt as if they had been seared by hot irons. With the tide of his returning memory he recalled dropping off to sleep soon after the mysterious shot had been fired. And now here was Mulliner, knife in hand, and looking quite amiable, ready to set him free.

"You can cut the ropes as soon as you like Mr. Mulliner," he said with alacrity, "but what has happened?"

"The captain has come to his senses again," was the rejoinder in a rather uneasy tone, as

Mr. Mulliner cut at the ropes, keeping at the work till Jack was free.

"I thought—that is I am sure I heard a shot in the night," pursued Jack.

The officer's reticence increased.

"That was nothing," he said. "I wouldn't be too curious. Just be glad that the captain has ordered you set at liberty."

"He had no right to ever order me confined," cried Jack hotly.

"That's as it may be. On the high seas whatever he says goes. However, my advice is to keep quiet about this incident. I'm sure the skipper will."

"I'll not keep quiet about it," protested Jack vigorously, "it was an outrage. I shall report it to the owners."

"If you do you'll only get a reputation as a trouble-maker, and that is a bad thing for a young man to have," was the reply. "Captain Briggs is not regularly employed by the Jukes'

concern, and he would care little about anything you might say. He was just picked up, as you may say, to run the *Cambodian* to Rotterdam and back till one of their own captains gets off the sick list."

This put things in a new light. Jack thought deeply as he sat on the edge of his bunk chafing his burning wrists to restore circulation. After delivering his advice, Mr. Mulliner had taken his departure.

"This is surely a strange ship and a strange voyage," thought the boy, "and I've got a notion that the end isn't yet, by a long way. There's some mystery about that shot in the night too. I mean to find out what it was. Anyhow, I'm at liberty again and I suppose that, as Mulliner said, my best plan is not to cross the captain more than I can help, and wait my opportunity to get back at him for all he has made me suffer."

Then came the thought of Raynor. Jack, al-

though he was famished for food, sat down at the wireless key and sent out broadcast inquiries. But although he talked to a dozen ships, passenger vessels and freighters like the *Cambodian*, none reported picking up a castaway. It was with a heavy heart indeed that Jack turned away from his instruments.

His appetite was gone, but he told himself that he must eat. He made his way below. Breakfast was over but the German steward made him some hot coffee and got some rolls. While Jack ate the man, who was a garrulous fellow, talked.

"Dot vos fine diddings vot vee haf py der nightdt ain'd idt?" he began.

"How do you mean?" asked Jack.

"Vot, you ain't heard alretty. Vale der captain's be py his bunk mit a bullet in his shoulder. He haf fights midt der man vot vos in der grows nest. Der captain say he haf him pudt in irons for not sighding der iceberg more quivicker.

Der man get madt undt der captain try to shoodt him. In der struggle der pisdol goes off and hits der captain. Der man is a prisoner. He goes by chail ven ve gedt to Rotterdam."

"How do the crew take it?" asked Jack, recollecting what the man Andrews had said in the night.

"Dey is very quiedt."

"Nobody saying anything?"

"Nodt a vurd. Budt dey visper among demselves. Dot badt sign. Vunce pefore I vos on a ship vere der crew visper. Dere vos murder done pefore vee made port."

"Oh, well, there's nothing like that here," said Jack with a breezy confidence he was far from feeling. "It's true our crew is a mixed lot, but I don't think there'll be any serious trouble."

He returned to the wireless room and spent the rest of the forenoon talking to various ships. The ice-patrol reports showed that the bergs had been left behind. The young operator carried

his reports to Mr. Mulliner. Captain Briggs did not appear on the bridge till the next day. Then he carried his arm in a sling. From his friend, the steward, Jack learned that the wound was only a flesh one, the bullet having passed right through without lodging.

The remainder of the voyage to Rotterdam was without incident. The crew went about their tasks dutifully but without a word. A sullen silence was over them. Jack felt that, despite the apparent air of peace, a volcano was smoldering under their feet that was ready to break at any moment. He was glad when they tied up at Rotterdam and he was free for a run ashore. But the sight of the country saddened him. It reminded him of the time he and Raynor had spent such a happy time sight-seeing when on his first voyage the *Ajax* had docked at Antwerp.

Where was Raynor now? Curiously enough Jack could not bring himself to the belief that

his ship-mate and chum was dead. But he thought of him almost constantly. He bought lots of postcards and mailed them home and received some mail, too. Among the latter, which had come by fast mail steamer and reached port three days ahead of the *Cambodian,* was a letter from Uncle Toby that puzzled Jack considerably.

"Deer buoy"—it read,—"here's hopping yew will sune be hoam. Strainge things have been hapning. Capun Walters has gone to glory but lef me die-and-gram and much infumachun erbout sum berried trezer. Leastwayz itz not berried but hidun. If I kan find it we will be rich, so hurry back, your affeckshonite unkil Toby."

"Now, what wonderful scheme is this?" said Jack to himself, with a half smile, and speedily forgot the matter, for Uncle Toby was prolific of fortune making plans and usually had a fresh one to broach to Jack after every voyage.

Jack would have liked to go to Antwerp to visit the good friends that he and Raynor had made

there as a sequel to a surprising night adventure, the details of which were related in the first volume of this series. But he felt that he could not face them with the story of the young engineer's loss; for even Jack was beginning to lose hope by this time.

There was little to do while the ship was in port, and Jack devoted a good deal of time to putting the finishing touches on his portable wireless set. Captain Briggs was ashore most of the time, coming back to the ship usually late at night and walking none too steadily. His wound had long since healed and the man who had inflicted it had been tried. But owing to some peculiarity of foreign law, he was acquitted. Jack was not sorry when he heard this, for he had come to regard the captain as a coarse, brutal bully, whose excesses only made him the more truculent. As to Jack's imprisonment, it had not been referred to by the captain and Jack

felt inclined to take the chief officer's advice when his wrath cooled and let "sleeping dogs lie."

Thus matters stood one evening when Jack, who had been into the town to a moving picture show, was making his way back to the ship. The docks were dark, forbidding places at night. Here and there a sputtering arc light hung from a gloomy warehouse. But these lights only made little islands of light, outside which the shadows lay blacker and thicker than ever.

Brawls were of frequent occurrence among the foreign sailors, and altogether the place bore a bad reputation. As Jack came out of a narrow alley between two warehouses he became aware of a figure skulking along ahead of him.

There was something indescribably furtive and suspicious in the way in which this man crept along, hugging the wall and gazing straight ahead of him. A filtering ray of light struck his head for an instant and Jack saw that in the

man's ears were earrings such as Spanish sailors wear.

The next instant he saw another figure still further in advance. As it passed under a light he recognized the stocky form and unsteady gait of Captain Briggs. At the same instant it flashed across him that the man with the earrings was Pedro Alvarez, the sailor who had had the tussle with the captain in which the latter was shot.

"Is he after revenge or what?" Jack wondered as he drew into a slight recess in the wall as Alvarez turned a corner and still skulked on like some wild beast stalking its prey.

"It sure looks as if there was going to be trouble," the boy said to himself. "Guess I'll just follow along and be handy in case of mischief. Confound it, I wish I'd brought a gun, as this Alvarez is said to be an ugly customer."

But, after all, like most healthy American boys, Jack had no love for firearms. He preferred to use his fists when the occasion arose and he knew

that at the end of each of his stout arms he had a formidable weapon.

Along the dark docks the strange trio strung their way. In the lead Captain Briggs rolled along, sometimes bawling out snatches of sea songs, behind him, and creeping closer all the time, came Alvarez and, last of all, Jack, his every muscle and sense tensed for the climax that he felt must come now at almost any instant.

Suddenly, like a wild cat, the Spaniard darted forward. He flung his lithe form on the stout captain, taking him utterly by surprise. Jack, in the little light there was, caught the gleam of an upraised knife as he dashed toward the spot where Captain Briggs was struggling with his foe.

"Help!" roared the captain, but the cry was choked back in his windpipe as the Spaniard's long, muscular fingers closed on the seaman's throat.

"There ees no help for you," snarled Alvarez,

"for put me in preeson I keel you. I am Catalonian; we never for-geeve or forget."

He raised his knife high, but the next instant a violent blow caught him under the chin and gave him the impression he had been struck by a pile driver. The knife went whirling out of his hand and fell, with a metallic ring, on a cement string piece some distance away.

"Caramba!" howled the Spaniard, holding his jaw.

Captain Briggs still lay sprawling on the dock. He was still only half aware of what was going on.

"Come, get up, captain," said Jack, extending a hand. As he did so Alvarez made a rush for the young operator who had put his plans of revenge to rout. But again Jack was prepared for him. In his pocket he had a small nickel plated wrench. He held this like a pistol and pointed it straight at Alvarez, who had produced another knife.

"Stand where you are!" exclaimed the boy, "or take the consequences."

The Spaniard stopped.

"Now, then, hands up," ordered Jack, and then turned to the captain. "Captain, I see some rope over there. Will you borrow it and tie that rascal up while I keep him covered."

The captain rose to his feet blinking, but he managed to get through his muddled intellect what Jack wanted him to do. In five minutes Alvarez was tied securely.

"Now, then, quick march," said Jack, getting behind him.

"Where you teek me?" sputtered the Spaniard.

"To the ship. In the morning you will be lodged in jail, I hope."

As they advanced to the ship, which lay two piers away, Jack explained to the captain the narrow escape he had had. The captain thanked him with maudlin tears, which rather disgusted Jack. When the ship was reached the captain

reeled off to bed while Jack placed Alvarez forward under the guard of two men.

"He'll be all right till morning," he said to himself, but when morning came, Alvarez was gone.

The ropes that had bound him had been cut. They lay on the deck with cleanly severed ends.

Jack cross-examined the two sailors, set to guard him, severely. Both protested vigorously they had not taken their eyes off him all night. But Jack, of course, knew better. He knew, too, that among the superstitious sailors Alvarez, on account of certain claims he made to being a wizard, had much influence. It was certain he had escaped with the connivance of the crew.

"Well, good riddance of bad rubbish," commented Jack to himself, little dreaming that he was destined to encounter Alvarez again.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON BOARD THE "POLLY ANN."

When Raynor opened his eyes again he found himself lying on a bunk in a small cabin. Across the single port-hole which lighted it was a red calico curtain. Rough beams crossed the ceiling, from which swung a ship's lantern, unlighted, of course, at that time of day.

He was on board a ship and a ship that was under way, for he could feel the rise and heave of her hull as she took the seas. With keen curiosity, he sat up. The furniture enumerated was all that he could see in the cabin. There was not even a strip of carpet on the floor, which was of well scrubbed planking.

He looked out of the port. All about him were tumbling green waves through which the schooner,—for he had long since guessed he was

on board the craft that rescued him,—was driving smartly. He felt slightly dizzy and sat down on the bunk for an instant before he rose to open the door and find his rescuers and thank them. When he did so he experienced a shock.

The door was locked!

The briefest of investigations proved that it was locked from the outside, showing that he had been deliberately shut in, though for what purpose he could not imagine. He knocked impatiently at the door, hoping to attract the attention of somebody who could explain the mystery but nobody came. Raynor sat down on the bunk, again listening for any sign of movement without.

But none came for a long time. There was a great trampling to and fro of feet on deck and the timbers of the schooner complained as though she was being forced through the water, but this, and the constant rush of water along her sides, were the only sounds.

"Bother it all," muttered Raynor, "this is a fine way to treat a rescued castaway. Anyone would think I was a prisoner."

But at last there sounded steps outside and the rattling of a key in the lock and the door was flung open. The yellow-bearded man stood in the doorway, almost filling its frame with his huge bulk. He looked down at Raynor with a rather amused smile.

"I suppose you have been thinking that we don't treat our guests very well on the *Polly Ann?*" he said in a deep, gruff voice.

"Well, I don't see why I was locked in," rejoined Raynor in a rather aggrieved tone.

"Maybe it didn't occur to you that we might have private matters on board that we don't want strangers peering into," was the calm reply. "You know you were not invited on board."

Raynor felt a sudden twinge of remorse. After all, he owed his life to this man. He began to

thank him but the other silenced him with the wave of a hand.

"That was nothing. Anyhow, I got a fine bear pelt out of it. One of the finest I ever saw. But to get down to business. Have you any idea where you are?"

"On board the schooner *Polly Ann,*" rejoined Raynor, with an oddly uncomfortable feeling.

"True enough, but do you know anything about her?"

Raynor shook his head.

"Well, she's Terror Carson's craft. I'm Terror Carson. If you'd ever been in the northern seas, where we are bound, you'd have heard of me."

The man uttered his sinister name with some pride. He squared his huge shoulders and stroked his glowing beard with evident satisfaction. Raynor felt his heart sink. There was something wrong about this schooner and this man.

"You are going north trading?" he asked, intending to demand being put aboard the first steamer or other vessel bound for the states that they encountered.

Terror Carson burst into a mighty laugh that seemed to shake the cabin timbers.

"Yes, we're going trading. Trading in our own line," he said, and then he beckoned to Raynor to come out into the main cabin from which six smaller ones, similar to the one the young engineer had occupied, opened.

"See those?" he asked, and pointed to three bright brass cannons that were ranged at the stern inside closed ports. "We use those in our trading. You see we are what the courts of law and the international boundary authorities call 'seal poachers.'"

"Seal poachers!" Raynor shrank back. He had heard of these wild, lawless men of the north who defied the international boundary rules and even war-ships sent to enforce them. Not a few

of them, as he knew, had been captured after hard chases and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. He could hardly bring himself to speak his next words.

"But of course you will put me on board the first vessel we sight," he said, "you see, Captain Carson, I——"

"Oh, no, we can't lose you now," chuckled the yellow-bearded man, "you know too much. We need an assistant cook and I think you are just the man for the job."

"Do you mean to say that, against my will, and against the law——" began Raynor, but Terror Carson checked him.

"You forget we know no law," he said.

"Well, then, against my will you mean to enroll me as one of this lawless crew."

"That's about the idea," drawled Carson amiably.

"But if we are caught by some British cruiser,

I shall be imprisoned as one of you!" burst out Raynor frantically.

"That's something you will have to take your chances of. You shouldn't have fallen overboard from the *Cambodian* and then this wouldn't have happened. You see I know some of your story and have guessed the rest.

"While you were asleep I took the liberty of reading your papers. Here they are," and with all the grace in the world, Terror Carson handed the bewildered young engineer a package and a wallet which had been abstracted from his inner pocket.

"Now we will go on deck," said Terror Carson, "and I'll show you the scene of your future labors. You will berth and have your meals in the cabin and not with the men."

Raynor felt grateful for this at least, for he judged the crew of a craft like the *Polly Ann* could be little better than a lot of desperadoes. But he was not prepared for the array of villain-

ous, hard-bitten countenances he saw when they reached the deck. The schooner was under full sail and racing northward like a swift sea bird.

Except for the man at the helm, and a short, stocky man who was standing by him and gazing up at the rigging, the men were all lounging about, some squatting under the weather bulwarks. The short, stocky man proved to be the mate, Mr. Wiggins, a real "down-east bucko," Terror Carson described him as being. The midship decks were piled with lashed down dories and from the stern davits hung a smart whale boat.

Aft of the foremast was a squat, white house with an iron pipe projecting from it. Terror Carson led the way there with Raynor at his heels. The men's eyes followed them, some with scowls and some with curiosity.

From the door of the galley, or ship's kitchen, for that is what the white structure was, there issued a cloud of steam as they approached. Sud-

denly, in the midst of the volume of vapor, there appeared the round, good-natured, freckled face of a lad of about Raynor's own age. His head, of bright red hair, was uncovered, and he wore a very dirty apron about his waist.

"Noddy Nipper," said Terror Carson, nodding toward Raynor, "here's our assistant cook. Make him work, and if there's any nonsense report him to me. That's all."

With an upward look at the sails, he turned on the heel of his big sea-boots and strode off aft, leaving the half-stupefied Raynor staring at the red-headed youth.

CHAPTER IX.

A JOKE ON POMPEY.

"So, youse is de guy what was floating about on a chunk uv ice tryin' ter be pals wid a poley bear?" said Noddy, with an accent that betrayed him at once as being from the Bowery, or near it.

Raynor smiled faintly.

"Well, I got bounced off my ship on to that iceberg and came nearly being a meal for the bear if it hadn't been for your captain, Terror Carson, as he calls himself."

"An' he's a Terror, all right, all right, take dat right frum yer Uncle Dudley," said Noddy, sinking his voice mysteriously. "I feel kind er sorry fer youse, fer youse ain't ther sort as belongs aboard this wind-jammer. But take it frum me, kid, if yer follers my advice you'll git along all right. An' now let's put youse ter woik.

I see old Terror lookin' this way. Jes' trim them murphies uv their packets an' then I'll think up suthin' else fer yer ter do. Gee! I'm reg'lar Fi't Averner style all right, wid me valley an' all."

Raynor determined to make the best of a bad job. At least Noddy, as he was called, seemed to be friendly and kind-hearted under his odd exterior. The young engineer turned up his sleeves and went valiantly to work. In a few moments Noddy, who had been busy over a big pan of "scouse," came to inspect his handiwork.

"Gee!" he exclaimed with scorn, "youse has got a lot ter learn erbout peelin' spuds. Youse cut off more pertater than yer do skin. Do it dis way. Watch me."

Raynor did better after this lesson, and before long had a big bucket-full of peeled potatoes that passed even Noddy's critical examination.

"Wes 'ull put 'em on ter cook now," said Noddy, "one bell has jus gone and ther old man

wants the gang ter git their scoff by five er clock."

At this juncture an aged colored man entered the galley. He wore a white cook's cap on his head, on which he had scrawled, with ink, Pompey James, Chief Cook of the *Polly Ann.* Noddy introduced him with a flourish.

"Pompey, old top," he exclaimed, "this is der new deputy assistant bottle washer."

"Ah'm glad ter meet yer," said Pompey ceremoniously, "ah hopes yo all is mo' circumambulatory in yo' ways dan dis yar raid haided boy. Gollyumptions, he shuh do make dis chile's life bud'ensome at times."

Noddy winked and grinned at Raynor. Then he turned suddenly and looked at Pompey with what appeared to be consternation.

"Gee! what's dat you got in yer wool, Jupe?" he exclaimed, for the cook had taken his white cap off so as not to get it dirty during his culinary operations.

"In mah hair, Noddy?" asked Pompey.

"Yes, sir, in your hair. It's big and white and round."

Pompey investigated his wooly poll, scratching it carefully all over. Of course he found nothing.

"Guess yo' all am tryin' ter fool dis chile," he said, with a good-natured grin, which showed a double set of white teeth.

"No, I ain't. On the level, look!" The Bowery boy reached for the negro's head and drew from it an egg. It was a simple sleight of hand trick. But Pompey stared in amazement at the egg as it lay in Noddy's palm.

"Land ob Goshen! How dat get dere?" he cried in great astonishment.

"Blessed if I know. Maybe you're turning into an incubator."

"Gollyumption!" gasped the negro, "I don' want ter be no inky beater, whateber dat may be."

"Well, take this egg and make a pudding with

it, see," said the red-headed Bowery youth, holding out the egg in his closed fist. But when he opened his fingers the egg was gone. Instead there lay a bright dime on Noddy's palm.

"Gee whaitakers. Don't dat beat de Dutch," exclaimed Noddy, in apparent astonishment, "queer things seem to be going on here all the time."

"Good land ob Beulah! Dis yah galley am voodooed!" yelled Pompey. "No, sah, I don' wan'ner touch dat money under no circumstantials. Dat am witch money, dat am."

"Oh, very well," exclaimed Noddy, spinning the coin in the air and catching it, "I kin use it, Pompey. Gee, it's great ter be pals wid de witches."

"Is yo' all a witch docto'?" asked Pompey with great awe.

"Sure I am. I'm a regular witch hazel from Witchville. Say," he broke off suddenly, "what's that growing out of this potato?"

He picked up a rotten one that Raynor had cast aside.

"Ain't nuffin dat I kin see," mumbled the colored man, much mystified but refusing to be trapped.

"Well, what d'yer call dis?" and the Bowery lad pulled another dime out of the tuber. "My goodness, Pompey, youse have got money scattered everywhere. Here, take this dime. Youse'll be a rich guy if youse keeps on."

Pompey took the dime. He turned it over thoughtfully, bit it and then said:

"Dat am good money fo' sho. But ah don' know but what it'll turn inter rats er mice befo' long."

Just at that moment Pompey was summoned aft by the captain's orders, who wanted to give some directions about his dinner. Noddy turned to Raynor with a grin.

"I've got him fooled to the queen's taste," he

chuckled. "After I've played a few more tricks on him I'll have him eating out'n my hand."

"But what's the use of scaring him that way?" asked Raynor.

Noddy stared at him. Then he whistled as if in astonishment and executed a sort of double shuffle.

"Say," he said in low tone as he concluded, "don't yer see my game? Dat old coon is the only friend we've got on this boat, and when the time comes for a getaway we'll need him."

"A getaway?" echoed Raynor, "then you want to escape?"

"Do I, say, kid, how'd you like to be tapped on the head in New York and shanghied on board a craft like dis?"

"You mean you were kidnapped on board?" asked Raynor, staring at the red-headed youth with whom he now felt a bond of sympathy.

"Surest t'ing you know. Write it in yo' little

book. But I mean ter get away first chance, you bet. Are you wid me?"

"I certainly am. This schooner is little better than a floating inferno."

"All right. Tip us yer mitt. When de time comes dat smoke ull be de guy ter help us. He ain't got no more use fer Terrer Carson dan I have, so fur as I've bin able to figger it out."

The two allies shook hands, but further conversation was barred just then for Pompey reentered the galley.

CHAPTER X.

PLANS TO ESCAPE.

Raynor found that his duties, besides his kitchen work, included waiting on the table in the cabin. He managed to acquit himself at this without getting into serious trouble, although Terror Carson gave him several gruff reproofs during the evening. When supper was over the duty of washing the dishes fell to the two boys. Pompey retired forward for a smoke and they had the galley to themselves.

The breeze, which had been steady all the afternoon, was beginning to increase. The schooner began to leap and strain as the waves grew bigger. Raynor found some difficulty in keeping his feet.

"Say, it's coming on to blow," observed Raynor.

"Yes, and that's too bad," rejoined Noddy. "I'd got it framed up fer a getaway ter night."

"To-night?" gasped Raynor.

"Yep, Pompey is to have the wheel to-night. He has that duty every two weeks. At midnight he'll be alone on deck and if we fix up like ghosts it would be dead easy to scare him and get at the boat on the stern davits and make our fare-you-well."

The boldness of the plan almost overcame Raynor.

"Here's de proposition," went on Noddy. "If we don't do it to-night we won't have a show ter take a crack at it fer annudder two weeks—see. By dat time de men say we'll be up among der ice where der seals are, an' it wouldn't do us no good if we did escape, fer deres mighty few craft up dere."

"Well, I'm game," said Raynor.

"Good for you," and Noddy dropped his voice and began whispering the details of his plan.

By the time they had finished their work the schooner was pitching and tossing wildly and they knew that the storm was on the increase.

"But dat don't make no never mind," declared the Bowery boy. "I've heard de men say dat de whale boat 'ud live in seas dat would sink de schooner."

They parted, Noddy to go forward to his bunk in a storeroom, where sails, paint, etc., were stored, and Raynor to his cabin. Terror Carson and his mate sat at the table. They took no notice of the lad. In his cabin Raynor did not take his clothes off. He could not have slept. The excitement of the projected escape would have prohibited that. Midnight was the hour agreed upon, and he listened to the ship's bell sounding the slowly passing hours, and half hours, with great impatience. At last the growl of voices in the cabin ceased and then two doors banged and Raynor knew the captain and mate had turned

in. Just then the bell struck seven times. It was eleven-thirty.

"This is a bad night to leave the ship," mused Raynor, as he sat waiting for the chiming of eight bells.

The schooner appeared to be under a press of canvas, for her hull was heeled over at a steep angle. At times she appeared to rush skyward and then hurtle down into a bottomless abyss. Raynor hoped the whaleboat was as seaworthy as such a type of boat is reputed to be. The thought of abandoning the enterprise, however, did not enter his head. As Noddy had pointed out, it might be their only chance of escape, and Raynor longed for nothing more than to get free of the *Polly Ann.* It was his paramount ambition and it would have taken more than a stormy night to stop him.

As eight bells struck, Raynor rose and cautiously opened the door of his cabin a crack. The swinging lamp outside was turned low and

the main cabin empty. He stole cautiously out and then ascended the companionway to the deck.

Luckily, the companionway entrance was below a break in the stern so that the man at the wheel—Pompey—could not see him as, crouched almost double, he crept forward to the small deck house where Noddy had his berth. It was a wild night. Big seas, their white tops luminous, raced by, towering above the schooner's rail. The speedy little vessel was heeled over almost on her beam ends at times, but she appeared remarkably seaworthy.

Not a soul could be seen on deck except Pompey's dark form at the wheel, revealed by the faint glow-worm light of the binnacle lamp. At last Raynor, with infinite caution, reached Noddy's sleeping place. He rapped three times, as they had agreed, and the door was opened.

Raynor almost uttered a cry of alarm as the portal was pulled back by Noddy. He saw what

appeared to be a human face enveloped in pale green fire, out of which shone two luminous eyes.

"Swell ghost, eh?" chuckled Noddy, pulling him inside. "I made de stuff out'n match heads. Come on, here's some fer you. Rub it on yer face an' den I'll give you yer shroud."

He held up a shapeless-looking garment of white sail cloth that he had made, and at the same time cautiously turned up the flame of a lantern that stood in a corner so that Raynor could see.

"I don't believe we can get away to-night in a small boat," declared Raynor as he daubed on the phosphorescent solution under Noddy's directions.

"Why not?" asked the Bowery lad.

"It's too rough. Feel how the schooner is pitching. It'll make the small boat dance about worse."

"Well, we gotter take our chances on dat," decided Noddy, "we'll take a look when we git outside."

At last the ghosts were ready. Raynor's heart beat rather faster than was comfortable as they crept out upon the heaving, tossing decks. If their plan failed, and Terror Carson discovered it, a terrible fate might be in store for them.

A strong wind whistled about them and a dash of rain beat in their faces.

"Gee! It is pretty bad, fer a fact," declared Noddy. "Well, let's get along to the stern."

They proceeded cautiously, doubled up under the shadow of the bulwark till they reached the break in the stern. Then, with an appalling yell, Noddy dashed up the steps leading on to the raised poop where the helmsman stood. Raynor was close behind him. Noddy's shriek was echoed by a shout of alarm from Pompey.

"Gollyumptions! Ghostesses! De good lawd hab mussey on mah soul! Oh, Massa, ghostesses don' hurt me! Wow!"

A wild yell of fear came from the trembling Pompey as Noddy raised a flaming hand and

pointed straight at him. Pompey dropped the spokes of the wheel and dashed forward, leaping the break of the poop in one jump. At the same instant the schooner "broached to" as her helm was deserted. The canvas flapped wildly and she rolled in the trough of the seas. A giant wave broke over her bow with a sound like thunder.

At the same instant, from below, came a stentorian shout like the roar of an angry bull.

"On deck, there! What in the name of Davy Jones is the matter?"

"That's Terror Carson!" cried Noddy. "Come on, let's get forward. No escape for us to-night."

The two boys rushed toward the bow just in time to avoid Carson, who came rushing on deck followed by his mate. They bolted into Noddy's sanctum in time to avoid the crew, who came tumbling up the fore-hatchway, and hastily removed their shrouds and washed off the phosphorus. Then they ran out and mingled with the

crowd on deck as if they had just been aroused by the confusion.

It was a wild scene on the deck of the *Polly Ann.* Carson himself had seized the tiller and was holding the craft on her course, but two sails had been ripped and a lot of water shipped over the bow. The boys came out just in time to see some sailors dragging Pompey aft from the galley, where he had taken refuge from what he thought were supernatural visitors.

The black was beside himself with fear of Terror Carson and alarm at what he had seen. He stammered out incoherent explanations about being scared from the wheel by "ghostesses." Carson roared savagely at him. He declared he had a good mind to have him flogged. But finally he commuted the sentence to two days in irons. The boys felt conscience-stricken at having involved poor Pompey in such a quandary, yet they could not have made explanations without making matters worse.

Fortunately for them, the confusion and crowd on deck were so great that nobody noticed from what direction they came when they appeared, and it was taken for granted by all concerned that both had rushed from their bunks when the general alarm that followed the "broaching to" of the schooner took place.

And so ended their first attempt to escape from the seal poacher *Polly Ann.* Both lads were bitterly disappointed at the way Fate had turned her face against them, but both determined to try again at the first opportunity. Meantime, the *Polly Ann* forged northward, and destiny was weaving strange threads which were fated to form an important part in the fabrics of their lives.

CHAPTER XI.

A FIENDISH PLOT.

Captain Briggs, in a sheepish sort of way, tried to make friends with Jack following the episode on the dock. But Jack had little use for the man and kept on with his own devices, paying little attention to Captain Briggs, except in the line of duty.

On the night before which they were to sail for America again, Jack had been uptown to post some cards and letters and did not return to the ship till about nine o'clock at night. As he made his way to his cabin, he was startled to see what he thought was a human figure gliding among the boats and life-rafts on the deck outside, for the wireless-room of the *Cambodian,* like most such structures, was perched upon the boat deck.

"Now, who could that be?" thought the boy.

"Guess I'll take a look around. These docks are infested with thieves, and although there's a watchman on duty, somebody may have sneaked on board."

But although he made what was quite a thorough search, he could find no trace of the man he thought he had seen dodging among the boats as if seeking a hiding place. He was forced to conclude at length that, in the uncertain light, he must have mistaken the swaying shadow of a rope or part of the rigging, for a human form.

"Well, I guess I'll turn in," decided Jack, as he opened his cabin door. "We sail early to-morrow and I'll have to be on the job."

He undressed slowly, thinking of many things, among them of Raynor and his fate.

"Somehow I cannot bring myself to believe that he is drowned," reflected the boy. "I'm just as sure as I am that I am sitting here that he will turn up some day. And yet he should have been picked up by one of the ships I spoke with

if he succeeded in keeping afloat. But maybe a sailing craft rescued him. In that case he might have to make a voyage to China before he could communicate with the outside world."

A slight noise outside made the boy sit up erect and listen intently. He went to the door and looked out. There was nothing out of the ordinary there.

"I must be nervous to-night," said Jack to himself, in tones of self-reproof. "What's the matter with me? First I think I see a man and then I think I hear someone snooping about. Guess this climate doesn't agree with me."

But Jack was not, as he indignantly assured himself, the victim of nerves. There was a man outside his cabin. A man who was watching him eagerly through a port-hole opening into the wireless room. The man had a yellow, evil face and two glittering black eyes like a snake's. In his ears hung two hoops of gold. It was Alvarez, the Spanish sailor.

He was there to witness the culmination of a plot he had formed that was to imperil Jack's life.

While Jack was in the town, the man had sneaked on board with the agility of a monkey, swarming up one of the mooring lines, unnoticed. He had made his way at once to the wireless room. Once inside, from his pocket he had produced wires and pliers.

For half an hour or more he worked feverishly and with a skill in handling his tools that showed he was an expert mechanician. Indeed, the man had once been a skilled electrician, but a crime he had committed had forced him to flee his country and leave his employment and become a common sailor.

Every now and then, as he worked, he would stop and tip-toe to the door of the wireless room. He had no wish to be caught napping for he knew the power of Jack's fist and the heavy penalty that would be visited upon him were he

caught in the fiendish work upon which he was engaged

Tirelessly he connected wires to terminals and finally he produced from his pocket an oblong black object formed, apparently, of metal. He connected wires to this and then, with a diabolical grin, planted it beneath the wireless table.

He had completed his work just in time to dart from the cabin as Jack's quick, firm step was heard ascending the companion ladder. So that the young wireless lad was not the victim of an illusion when he thought he saw a human figure.

Alvarez slipped in under a canvas boat cover while Jack was making a search. In his place of concealment he chuckled evilly to himself:

"Caramba! What a revenge is mine on this dog of a Yankee boy! Did he think that he could insult and beat a Spaniard without suffering? Todos los Santos, no! A few moments now and my revenge will be complete."

When Jack reëntered the cabin, the Spaniard had crawled from under the boat cover and taken up a place of vantage at a porthole where he could see into the cabin and watch Jack's every movement.

"Will he never go near the wireless key!" he exclaimed impatiently to himself as Jack, half-a-dozen times, appeared to be on the point of retiring. The young wireless operator felt strangely restless and disinclined to sleep. At last the wireless apparatus caught his eye.

"Guess I'll see if everything is in shape," he murmured to himself. "I won't have much time to effect repairs after we sail to-morrow."

Alvarez's eyes glowed like live coals and his yellow fingers clinched as he watched the lad approach the key.

He was like an evil serpent watching some victim nearing its fangs.

Jack pressed down the key.

There was a deafening explosion.

Amidst a glare of red flame and lurid smoke, the young operator staggered backward and fell unconscious on the floor of the cabin. In his forehead was a jagged gash from which the blood streamed over his white, lifeless face.

CHAPTER XII.

UNCLE TOBY IS OFF FOR TREASURE.

"What happened? Where am I?"

Jack asked the questions in a bewildered voice the next morning. His head throbbed cruelly, and placing his hand to his forehead he found that it was enveloped in bandages. Then he looked about him. He lay in a neat white cot in a beautifully clean room.

A young woman whom he knew was a nurse, by her uniform, bent over him.

"Hush! Do not excite yourself. Here comes the doctor."

A tall man, with spectacles, entered the room. He regarded Jack with satisfaction.

"Just as I said, only a flesh wound," he said, after he had removed the bandages, "it is getting on nicely. In a few days you will be up."

"In a few days!" gasped Jack, "but my ship will have sailed by then."

"That is all right. Her owners have been communicated with and you will go home as a passenger on a liner owned by them. That will be after you have given your deposition against the man Alvarez, in a court of law. He is a prisoner and is also in the hospital. He was slightly hurt when the port was blown out by the force of the explosion and was found unconscious when rescuers reached the scene. He thought he was going to die and has made a full confession."

"I don't understand," said Jack, in a puzzled way, "Alvarez, that's the sailor who was going to kill Captain Briggs. I punched him."

"Yes; and in revenge the man, with fiendish ingenuity, connected the current from your wireless key with a bomb that he placed under the wireless table. It was lucky he placed the infernal machine under the table, otherwise you

might have been killed. As it is, you have got off with a flesh wound inflicted by a bit of flying metal."

Jack lay in the hospital three days more. Then he appeared in a Rotterdam court and gave his account of the affair. The confession of Alvarez clinched the matter and the murderous Spaniard received a heavy sentence. A week later Jack found himself a passenger, "an idler," he called it, on board the United States liner *New Hampshire,* bound for New York.

He struck up a friendship with the wireless man and spent most of the time in his cabin.

But he was glad when at last the shores of Staten Island slipped by as the *New Hampshire* came up the harbor of New York and the tall buildings and web-like fabric of the Brooklyn Bridge came into view.

Jack was no sooner ashore than he started off for the Erie Basin, where lay the old *Venus,* Uncle Toby Ready's floating home. The recollection

of his uncle's strange letter was still strong in his mind. He wanted to get to Uncle Toby at once and dissuade him from rushing into any rash scheme. All the way over in the trolley car he had an odd presentiment in his mind that all was not well.

His uneasy feeling was increased when, having alighted from the car, he paced quickly along the docks. No smoke was curling from the stove pipe of the *Venus's* cabin as he neared that venerable derelict. This in itself was unusual, for Uncle Toby was almost always to be found brewing his strange concoctions of herbs and plants over the small ship's stove.

Jack hastened across the gang-plank leading on board the aged schooner that had sailed her last voyage many years before and now served as a floating home.

"Uncle Toby!" he hailed, "Uncle Toby!"

But no answer came to Jack's loud hails. They only echoed among the other battered old dere-

licts lying at the rotting wharves in that part of the Erie Basin.

A sickening fear suddenly overwhelmed him as he gazed along the silent decks and at the empty window boxes which usually, at this time of the year, were abloom with tulips of Uncle Toby's planting.

Could his uncle be dead?

But just at that moment he noticed on the door of the companionway, which led below to the living quarters, a square bit of paper. It was nailed there with enormous nails as if whoever had put it up was determined that it shouldn't come down in a hurry.

In the hope that it might throw some light on the mystery, Jack hastened to scrutinize it. It was covered with writing in Uncle Toby's rough and ready fist which looked as if an exploratory crab might have tumbled into some black mud and then performed various athletic feats on a sheet of paper.

The notice,—for such it was plainly intended to be, read as follows:

"To hoome it may consarn: Notice, Captain Toby Ready,—Doctor of Herbs,—has gone on a cruise fer plesure and proffit. Neffew Jack will please see Captain Dennis for partiklars."

At the bottom of this strange scrawl was the following verse, Cap'n Toby being ever fond of a bit of rhyme to adorn his conversation or his literary efforts.

"My name is Toby Ready, as I sail;
My name is Toby Ready, as I sail,
I'll get dollars manifold,
And riches unkontrold;
I'll buy Brooklyn when it's sold;
As I sail."

"Great gracious," gasped Jack, as he concluded this effort which he recognized as being Cap'n Toby's version of the song of Captain Kidd, "my uncle must have gone crazy. Whoever heard of such a thing. Off on a treasure hunt at his age, and with a wooden leg. Well, I guess

the only thing for me to do is to see Captain Dennis at once. It may not be too late to stop this insane trip, wherever it is to."

The young wireless man was given a warm greeting at Captain Dennis's cozy home in Greenwich Village that evening by the captain's pretty daughter, Helen. Jack found her just as charming as ever and was not sorry when she informed him that the captain would not be back from his work on the docks for an hour or more. Helen was all sympathy about Jack's wound, the scar of which still showed. They had read all about it in the papers, she said, with a pretty blush. It only seemed a few minutes to Jack, instead of the hour and a half it actually was, before Captain Dennis came in. He greeted Jack heartily but would not hear of discussing Uncle Toby's strange freak till after supper. Then, when he had lit his pipe, he told Jack what he knew of the matter.

It appeared, according to what Captain Dennis

knew, that soon after Jack had sailed on the *Cambodian,* a battered old mariner appeared at the *Venus* and asked for Captain Toby. This was the Captain Walters referred to in the strange letter Jack had received in Rotterdam.

Captain Walters, so it seemed, was an old whaling captain who had known Captain Toby many years before. He had been shipwrecked in the Arctic on his last voyage and after incredible hardships at last got back to America. But he was a mere shell of a man who sought out Captain Toby to see if that veteran had any remedies that would make him a well man and fit him to make up an expedition for some vague treasure he knew of in the land of ice.

But all Captain Toby's skill proved of no avail, and Captain Walters shortly set out on his last voyage. But before he died he confided to Uncle Toby full details of the location of the treasure and other important data. Armed with this, Captain Toby had succeeded in interesting a firm of

capitalists in the venture, and a week before, on a trim schooner, with a picked crew, had sailed for the Arctic regions. That was all Captain Dennis knew, but that the ancient mariner appeared beside himself with dreams of wealth, and said that when he returned he would be a millionaire.

"And there you have the story, my boy," said Captain Dennis, knocking the ashes out of his pipe, "and a more crack-brained, crazy cruise I never heard tell of, asking your pardon, because he's your uncle."

Jack engaged a cheap room for the remainder of his stay in New York, but he spent much of his time at the Dennis's. One day on the street he encountered Travis, the operator on the ship on which he had voyaged home. Travis had much to tell him. The *Cambodian* had arrived a week late, after a desperate mutiny, in which Captain Briggs was almost mortally wounded. Her entire crew was under arrest. But Travis

had something else to say that interested Jack a great deal.

"See here," said Jack's friend, "you haven't got another berth yet."

Jack shook his head rather disconsolately.

"No, Mr. Jukes is away on a cruise on his yacht," he said, "and down at the offices of the company I've got no pull."

"Well, see here," said Travis, slapping him on the back, "I know of a job that would just suit a fellow with your cut of jib. My brother is wireless man on the *Thespis* revenue cutter. She's just been assigned to the iceberg patrol. Jim is going to get married, though, and can get leave of absence if he can furnish a substitute of the right sort. You could make the cruise, it wouldn't last long, and be back in time to meet old Jukes when he returns. What do you say?"

"That it would be just the job for me—if I could land it!" cried Jack delightedly.

"No trouble about that," declared Travis

breezily. And so it proved. Jack was placed under a rather severe examination by the commander of the *Thespis*. But he came through with flying colors.

Another thing that gladdened him about his new job was that it would take him into the far regions of the north whither Uncle Toby, on his hare-brained treasure quest, had gone. Jack felt that he might get a chance to come in contact with his uncle. He had a vague feeling that all was not well. He had visited the offices of the firm that had financed Uncle Toby's venture and did not much like what he saw there. He talked to a ferret faced man who told him that Mr. Rufus Terrill, a member of the firm, had gone along on the treasure hunting schooner, as "our representative," but from a passing glint in the man's eyes Jack guessed that Mr. Rufus Terrill was on board to see that he and his partners got the lion's share.

"Still," the boy had mused, as he left the of-

fices in a shabby building off Wall Street, "Uncle Toby must have pretty good proofs that he was on a legitimate venture or he wouldn't have interested such sharp folks as Terrill & Co. What a queer thing it would be if, after all, he did come back rich. Well, stranger things have happened."

A week after he "signed on" as wireless man, for the nonce, of the *Thespis,* the trig revenue cutter nosed out of New York harbor bound for the frozen north, there to patrol the margin of the giant wastes of ice till the danger of icebergs for the year was over.

CHAPTER XIII.

POMPEY MYSTIFIED.

As the days slipped by and they worked farther north, the *Polly Ann* began to encounter nipping weather. Raynor, who had no thick clothes, suffered a good deal, but fortunately most of his work was in the galley where it was apt to be uncomfortably warm.

Noddy continued to play his tricks on Pompey, much to the latter's mystification. The darky had come to believe that the *Polly Ann* was haunted. In this way Noddy worked on his superstitious feelings till the black was quite as anxious as the boys to leave the schooner. But they did not deem the time yet ripe to broach their plans to him.

One day a fine pudding, made especially as a surprise for Terror Carson, vanished from the

galley almost under Pompey's nose. The negro was sorely puzzled.

"Dey suah am ghostesses in mah galley," he confided to others of the crew, who only laughed.

"Alright, yo' may laff, but ah done see two ghostesses wid mah own eyes de night ah dropped dat wheel. As spec's dere's bin such a power ob wickedness done on dis hyah boat dat de hants jes natch'ly sticks round it. Yas sah."

But when Pompey got back to his galley he was destined to be more mystified than ever. Lying on the top of the shelf, where he had placed it before its disappearance, was the pudding.

"Good land ob Beulah, de debbil is in dis galley fo' sho'," sputtered Pompey. "Hey, boys! Whar am dem boys?"

In a few minutes the boys came to answer his repeated calls, retaining grave faces with great difficulty while Pompey explained to them the mystery of the vanishing pudding.

"Ah lays it dar an' it am gone," he said in an

awestruck whisper. "When ah come back dar it is agin. Now if ghostesses don' do dat what does?"

"I dunno. It's sure mysterious," said the Bowery boy, "but say, Pompey, what's that bit of paper stuck on the pudding?"

"Mah goodness, dat mus' be some rheumaticacion frum der spirits," he exclaimed.

He gingerly took hold of a scrap of paper that lay on the top of the pudding. There was writing on it. Jupe looked at it in stupefaction.

"De spirits, or debbils or ghostesses or whoeber do dis yer voo-doo work am writing letters now," he exclaimed in a dumbfounded tone.

"What do they say?" asked the boys in tones of deep interest.

"Um-ah, les see. Why, dey says hyah, it's all wrote lak print: Obey de boys an' be dere fren' or de torture ob de parrellel oblongata parabolensis will be yours. Mah goodness! what am dat torture?"

"I've heard dat its a special kin' de spirits has," said the Bowery boy, "part of it is to pull off your skin with red hot pincers. I don't know the rest, but it's worse."

"Wusser 'en red hot pincers. Gollyumption! Say, boys, ole Pompey allers bin good to you alls, ain't he?"

"Sure you have," said Noddy, "but we're going to ask you a special favor sometime. Will you do it for us?"

"I sho' will. Anything at all. Mah goodness if ah didn't wouldn' ah get dat parrot yells and parasols torture. Red hot pincers—ugh! Reckon dem spirits ain't got no hearts at all."

One morning when Raynor came on deck he saw, lying on the sea, not more than half a mile off, an immense iceberg. Its pinnacles glittered in the bright sunlight.

Other bergs floated to the south and east. Ragged fields of ice stretched about them in long floes. The schooner was beating northward in

short tacks but did not appear to be making much progress. Just then Terror Carson came on deck. He looked about him and then spoke sharply to the man at the wheel.

"Are we making any northing?" he asked. "Hold her on her course you lubber."

"Faith, yer honor," rejoined the man at the wheel, a true son of Erin, "it sorra a bit will she walk at all, at all."

"What ails her?" demanded Carson, his brows gathering in a scowl.

"It's the southward set of the current, sor, I'm thinking," was the reply. "Divil a bit more north have we made the last hour than I could swing me mother's ould cat by her tail. It's wearisome wurruk, sor,—an thirsty, too."

"Well, there'll be no drinking on this ship," said Carson sharply, and strode forward. He hung over the bulwarks amidships, watching the icebergs intently. Raynor, at his work in the galley, observed him covertly. He thought Car-

son appeared worried at the close proximity of the floating mountains of ice.

Before long Raynor summoned him to breakfast. When he came on deck again the icebergs were closer. He turned on the steersman in a spasm of fury.

"You bog trotting land-lubber," he roared out with stentorian lungs, "where are your eyes?"

"Sure aich side of my nose, like any dacent Christian's," rejoined the man.

"Confound your impudence," thundered Carson, "don't you see the ice closing in on us."

"Shure, I couldn't git overboard and shove it back."

"You ought to have let me know of this," growled Carson angrily. He summoned his mate to his side. Raynor contrived an errand that should bring him near them.

"The channel is getting narrower," he heard the captain say. "I never saw the growlers so thick up here at this time of the year before."

"Better put about, sir, if we don't want to get nipped," advised the mate.

"I guess that's good advice," muttered Carson, "but I hate to turn our nose south again. 'Bout ship!" he bawled.

" 'Bout ship!" roared the mate. "Lively, boys, be smart! Leggo all tackles! Hard a lee on your wheel! Smartly, now."

The schooner's sails shivered and flapped as she came up into the wind. The crew hauled on ropes and halyards. Then the smart little schooner paid off handsomely and filled away on another tack.

It was none too soon. Ahead of them, drawn together by the ocean currents, two great bergs crashed together with the force of titanic steam hammers.

"If we'd been caught there, we'd have been smashed like an egg-shell," observed Terror Carson, to his mate, without any particular emotion now that the danger was over.

CHAPTER XIV.

TERROR CARSON'S NERVE.

Bang! Crash!

Raynor was almost thrown out of his bunk by a terrific concussion.

"Goodness! We've collided with Cape Race!" was his first exclamation.

He scrambled hastily into some clothes and was soon on deck. "We are foul of the ice!" yelled the mate, rushing forward.

"What's that?" roared Terror Carson. "I'll hang that rascally look-out to the yard-arm. Down helm there. Quick, now! The sea is full of loose ice."

It was about midnight and intensely dark to add to the confusion. A thin scud, borne of the cold air above the ice fields, obscured the stars and moon. It was almost impossible to see

anything. Through the darkness orders were bawled in what appeared to be a hopeless tangle.

Jack turned to find Noddy at his side.

"Gee! Guess we're in a tight place," said the Bowery boy.

"It looks that way. Did you feel that bump?"

"Did I? Gee, I tort I wuz at Coney Island bumpin' de bumps. But say, what's de matter?"

"We are in a field of loose ice. We struck a small growler I heard the captain say."

"I didn't hear nuffin growl but I guess it's all right," observed Noddy. "Say, do youse tink we'll ever git out'n dis?"

"Never say die, you know," rejoined Raynor, "but look what's that on our bow?"

"Looks like a big black tenement house wid no lights in der winders."

"It's a berg."

"Holy Moses and we're headed right bang fer it. Hold fast!"

"Light a flare there," shouted the captain suddenly. The next moment the ghastly blue glare of a Coston light sputtered up. The sight the blaze revealed was a terrifying one.

There were two bergs. Both of them giants and both approaching each other. Between them was only a narrow passage. Waves dashed against their sides as the sea forced its way through the narrow channel. They were fairly caught in a trap. It was impossible to go about in that sea of ice.

"Chee, we're goners," cried Noddy, "we'll git squeezed in between 'em like a lemon."

"It looks as if there was no hope," admitted Raynor. Then he looked round at Terror Carson. Like a man of steel the skipper of the *Polly Ann* stood poised on the bulwarks, steadying himself by a back stay. He seemed to be gauging the distance between the two converging bergs and the schooner. Raynor almost found it in

his heart to admire his stoical calm in that supreme moment.

"Can we make it, sir?"

It was the mate speaking. He was ordinarily a calm, stolid man, but now his voice was hoarse with tension.

"I don't know. We must if we can. It's the only way out," was the calm reply, "order all hands to sheets and braces."

"Sheets and braces!" bawled out the mate.

There was a scampering along the decks. Every man stood at his appointed place. Raynor and Noddy, as "idlers," as cooks and so forth are classed, had nothing to do but watch.

"Jove," exclaimed Raynor, "Carson's going to try to get us out of it."

"He don't stan' no more chance than a chicken at a nigger picnic," opined Noddy dolefully.

Terror Carson clambered down from his post on the bulwark. Quite slowly, as if there was

no urgent hurry, he strode back toward the helm. Suddenly he gave a sharp order.

"Break out your top-sails and keep the lights burning."

There was a brisk breeze, and as the topsails were added to the schooner's canvas, the masts bent like whips. The craft heeled, shook herself and then bounded forward like a race horse. With iron bound muscles Carson, his legs braced apart, stood at the wheel, gripping the spokes. His steady blue eyes gazed straight ahead. He seemed to steer by instinct.

Raynor could almost have found it in his heart to admire him. Noddy was outspoken in his praise.

"Gee, that guy kin sure handle a ship," he exclaimed.

The bows of the schooner were pointed straight for the narrow passage between the bergs, a channel which was closing in every minute. Her rigging screeched and her hull groaned

under the press of canvas she was carrying. Raynor looked aloft anxiously. If anything carried away now, their doom was sealed.

In the blue glare of the lights the bergs looked gigantic. Their summits were fretted into pinnacles and steeples like those of a cathedral. The ice shimmered and flashed as the lambent glare shone on it. But the boys only gazed at the black channel between the two glittering monoliths of ice.

And now the mighty tops loomed right above them. A shout they could not repress broke from the sailors as the *Polly Ann* darted forward. Right for the black passage she made. The salt spray from the waves that dashed on the icy cliffs showered the schooner's deck.

"Get ready to jump for the ice if we strike," breathed Raynor, "it's our only hope!"

CHAPTER XV.

A WHALE IS ANNOYED.

For an awful instant the wind dropped. Then came a mighty puff. The topsails filled. The *Polly Ann* heeled over till it seemed she must capsize—and darted forward.

The next instant they were between the bergs.

"Lights!" roared Terror Carson. Immediately two flares showed they were in the ice chasm. Luckily one of the bergs was bisected by a sort of valley.

This allowed the breeze to blow through and saved the *Polly Ann.* Gallantly she sped through the fearfully narrow passage and then, while the crew broke into a cheer, she sped into the open sea beyond.

It was a masterly stroke of seamanship. But Terror Carson, as he relinquished the wheel, did

not show in his manner that he deemed he had accomplished anything extraordinary.

B-o-o-m!

Behind them the mountains of ice crashed together.

"Boys, but for Terror Carson we'd have been there," bawled out a deep-sea voice from the darkness forward. "Three cheers for Terror."

They were given with hoarse, raucous enthusiasm. But Carson gave no sign that he heard. He folded his arms and went below. Great swells, generated by the impact of the two giant bergs, came racing after the *Polly Ann* as if angry she had escaped the fate that had appeared certain.

Behind them they could hear crash after crash, like the noise of heavy artillery, as ice pinnacles and towers were snapped off as the ice mountains scraped together. These rugged summits, falling into the sea, formed smaller bergs. The noise was appalling.

But the danger was over!

It was with a heart full of thankfulness that Raynor turned in that night. He awakened at his usual hour and made his way forward to the galley. Early as it was, Terror Carson was already on deck. He sat on the companionway fussing with some bits of mechanical apparatus. Raynor glanced at them carelessly as he passed and then thrilled with a sudden shock.

Terror Carson was examining parts of a wireless apparatus!

A means of communicating his plight to the outside world flashed into Raynor's mind for, as we know, under Jack's tutorship, he had become a fairly expert operator. Terror Carson looked up quickly as the boy half paused.

"Do you understand wireless, younker?" he demanded bruskly.

Raynor was about to reply in the affirmative when something checked him. He shook his head, guided by some intuition.

"Too bad," said Terror Carson, "I got this outfit, thinking it would be a good way to keep clear of government craft. But I left in too much of a hurry to get an operator. I've been trying to master it but I guess I haven't got the brains, and if I haven't—nobody else on board has."

Nothing more was heard or seen of the wireless apparatus just then, and Raynor was glad he had denied knowledge of it, for otherwise he would have been compelled to work it to keep clear of any ships that might be cruising in the vicinity and offer a chance of escape. But it gave a queer sidelight into the cleverness of Terror Carson. Not many seal poachers would have thought of such a trick to dodge the cruisers sent after them.

Still, he had nobody to work it, which certainly reduced its value to nil. How Raynor longed to get a chance to set the wireless up and operate the key! He felt sure that were he in

a position to do so, he could soon have summoned help.

But, as he was fain to admit to himself as he went about his kitchen tasks, he might just as well have wished for the moon. He did not even know where Carson had locked up the temporarily useless radio set.

The next day a terrific Arctic storm descended on the *Polly Ann*. The wind blew with a velocity that threatened to tear the sails from the bolt ropes, and icy sleet and snow enveloped the craft as if in a white blanket.

She scudded forward under almost bare poles. Raynor found cause during those hours to admire Terror Carson's schooner, which was the staunchest, swiftest craft he had ever seen. It appeared marvelous that anything built by man's hands could endure the merciless racking the *Polly Ann* submitted to.

Work in the galley was only carried on with the greatest difficulty during this period. The

men forward lived on water and biscuit and hot meals were cooked only for the officers.

And all this time Raynor was profoundly ignorant of the destination of the storm-driven schooner, or if she was nearing it. By the amount of northing that had been made, he knew that they were getting into the region of seals, but Terror Carson gave no sign that he intended to lie to.

In the midst of the white storm an incident happened which, looked at afterward, was amusing, but at the time it occurred was actually alarming. Not long after the dinner hour, while the storm was at its height, the schooner struck some solid object with a dull thud that made her shake from head to stern.

"Land ho! We've struck!" bawled some of the crew.

But the *Polly Ann* flew onward, and in a few seconds the cause of the bump was ascertained when, over the lee rail, was seen an immense

"right" whale. The creature spouted in indignation as the schooner, her rail lined with men, shot by. The water fell in a shower on the decks, drenching them.

"That's the whale's way of getting even fer dat uppercut we handed him," grinned Noddy comprehendingly.

The next day the gale had decreased in violence and the weather cleared. Raynor, on his way from the galley with the mid-day meal, looked up to windward and suddenly saw something that made his heart bound.

It was another schooner, also flying north under a press of sail. Like a flash an idea came to him. In a stern locker, already bent to the hoisting halyards, was the schooner's ensign,—one of many, for at different times it suited Teror Carson to belong to different nations. This flag was a United States ensign. Raynor's daring plan was to reverse the flag in the universal

language of distress and summon aid from the other schooner.

He looked at the man at the wheel. The fellow was dozing apparently. Raynor set down the tin dishes he was carrying aft and cautiously approached the flag locker.

It was the work of only a moment to reverse the ensign.

"Now I'll hoist it and then hide some place till that other craft sends a boat," thought Raynor.

With infinite caution he began to hoist the reversed flag. It fluttered out bravely in the brisk wind.

Raynor's heart beat high.

"Jove, I believe it will be successful," he exclaimed to himself.

The flag reached the peak and streamed out in the wind.

"Now if they only see it," thought Raynor. He watched the schooner in an agony of apprehension. Then, with a cry of triumph that

he could not suppress, he saw the canvas on the other craft flapping as she put about.

So absorbed was he in the spectacle that he did not notice a quick, sharp tread behind him, did not see the uplifted sledge-hammer fist of Terror Carson.

But the next moment a terrific blow felled him to the deck.

CHAPTER XVI.

LOCKED IN THE CABIN.

Half stunned, Raynor looked up in time to see Carson lowering the reversed ensign. He staggered painfully to his feet. He was in time to see the other schooner filling away again on her course as those on board her saw the signal of distress lowered to the deck.

Carson paid no attention to Raynor till he had finished with the ensign. Then, in bitter tones, he told him to follow him. Raynor had no resource but to obey.

The captain took him aft and opened the door of a small cabin. It was not the one Raynor had been used to occupy.

"I'm going to lock you up in here," he said, "for the time being. I'll decide what to do with you later."

"Why can't you let me go?" demanded Raynor, "I'm no good to you in your poaching schemes and sooner or later you'll have to free me. Why not now?"

"Because you know too much," was the answer. The captain turned on his heel and slammed the door. Raynor heard a wooden bar fall into sockets on the outside. He was a prisoner. No one came near him for the rest of that day.

The room was lighted by a small port. By looking out of this Raynor was able to make out that he was confined in the extreme stern of the schooner. Right over the rudder, in fact.

When darkness came he stretched himself out on the single bunk which ran along one side of the cabin. It boasted no bed clothes and he was very cold. But youth, and his exhausted condition after the excitements of the day, overcame him, and he was soon fast asleep.

In the morning he was scarcely awake before

Pompey appeared with some bread and a jug of water.

"Is that all I get to eat?" demanded Raynor who, despite his plight, had his appetite.

"Das all," said Pompey commiseratingly, "dat cap'n he say yo' blood need coolin' wid light diet."

"Do you know if I'm to be let out, Pompey?" asked Raynor with some anxiety.

"Dat am a subjec' upon which ah am discommoded by de captain suppressed commands ter conversationalize," rejoined Pompey. "I'se mighty sorry, but ah jes' got to keep quiet while ah's in hyah."

He shook his woolly head solemnly and then, having set down the breakfast, if such it could be called, took his departure. Raynor heard the confining bar fall as the door was locked. He groaned aloud.

"Oh, what a fix," he muttered, "out of the frying pan into the fire. If I ever get out of this,

catch me ever sitting on a steamer's rail with my legs swinging, for all my troubles come from that. Good old Jack, if only I had heeded his advice. I wonder what he is doing now?"

He broke off his reflections with a heavy sigh, and tackled the uninviting-looking stale bread. First, however, he took a hearty draught from the water pitcher, for he was very thirsty.

He was munching away at a dried crust when he suddenly saw some object dangling in front of the cabin port hole. At first he thought it was a sea bird. But the next instant he made it out as a parcel hanging on the end of a string.

"Must be for me," mused the lad, and reaching out an arm he drew in the package. The string came with it, as whoever had lowered the package from the stern deck above, released his grip.

Raynor tore away the wrappings and revealed what was to him just then a banquet. There was a chicken wing, crisp fried potatoes, pickles and

a wedge of pie. Scrawled on the paper which contained the meal was this message:

"Ete harty."

"That's good old Noddy," cried Raynor to himself, his eyes growing misty. "He's stolen part of that chicken that was killed yesterday for the captain's dinner and risked punishment to help me out. What a fine fellow he is for all his odd ways!"

With a good appetite Raynor fell to on the daintier fare that had come to him by "air route." In a short time not a crumb was left. The day wore slowly away after that. At dusk Pompey appeared and thrust a lantern inside the cabin. But he did not speak. From this Raynor judged that Terror Carson was near at hand.

His captivity was wearing on him, even in the short time that he had been confined. He had nothing to read, and had passed the long hours of daylight gazing out of the port hole and watching the waves and an occasional sea-bird that

swooped in the schooner's wake, alert for scraps from the galley.

The lantern was a welcome companion at least. Raynor felt that he could not have passed an entire night in the dark with only his thoughts for company. He hung the lantern on a hook on the ceiling and cast himself on his back on the bunk.

All at once he sat bolt upright with an exclamation.

"I can't stand this any longer. I've got to find some way of escape."

But a brief survey of the tiny cabin showed that this was a much easier thing to plan than to accomplish. The door was solid, so were the walls and the ceiling. At last there remained only the floor. A shabby worn strip of carpet was nailed on it.

"I might as well be thorough about this," mused Raynor and he ripped the flimsy fabric

from the planks. Something met his eyes that made them shine with delight.

"Eureka!" he cried, "I've found it."

Under the shabby carpet was an iron ring let into what appeared to be a small trap-door.

"Here's where I fool Terror Carson," murmured Raynor, as he inserted his fingers in the ring and tugged with all his strength.

CHAPTER XVII.

IN THE EYES OF THE SHIP.

The square piece of flooring swung upward. It revealed a dark hole and the top rounds of a ladder.

"Must go down into the hold," decided Raynor.

He held the lantern into the black rectangle left gaping by the opened trap-door. It did not reveal much, except beams and timbers and the rest of the ladder.

A dank, musty smell came up from below. Then came a noise that so startled Raynor he almost dropped the lantern. It sounded like the rush of a gale of wind. But the next minute he knew what it was. The scampering of myriads of rats. He could hear their squeaks and gib-

bers as, alarmed by the light, they fled through the hold.

"Well, I might as well risk it," thought the boy. "If it doesn't lead to anything I can always get back."

Taking the lantern, he cautiously descended the ladder. Soon he found himself on the floor of the hold. It reeked with a nauseating fishy smell which Raynor knew must have come from the numerous cargoes of seal oil and skins the *Polly Ann* had carried in times past.

The hold was rather unevenly floored and the pitching of the schooner made the lad's advance somewhat difficult. But, holding his lantern aloft, he made his way forward. He had reached a point where the hold narrowed into a small triangle, the very "eyes" of the ship, as sailors call it, when he saw a ladder.

"Guess, since I'm embarked on this enterprise, I might as well see it through," thought the lad.

He clambered up the ladder and found a closed hatchway at the top. Not without misgivings

he shoved it upward, and found himself in a tiny triangular cubby hole full of odds and ends of chains and ropes.

He knew at once where he was. In his ramblings about the ship he had noticed this little triangular space in the bows and thought of it in a casual way as a good hiding place, if the time ever came to use it. He blew out his lantern and cast himself down on a bale of oakum. But he was far from comfortable in his retreat.

Every time a wave broke over the bow it drenched him. Soon he was soaked through and miserable. He had put some of the bread Pompey had brought him that morning in his pockets. From time to time he chewed a bit of it, more for the sake of doing something than with the idea of satisfying his appetite.

At length he fell into an uneasy doze. He was awakened by hearing voices near him. It was daylight, as he could see by the light that filtered through cracks in his hiding place.

"Be jabbers," said the voice of the Irish helmsman, "the bye isn't on board this hooker. It's mesilf as has searched frum stem to starn entirely."

"Yo' tak mah bible word fo' it O'Brien," responded Pompey's voice, "dat ghostesses has taken dat lad. Dey took mah puddin' one night, now dey take one ob mah deputised cooks."

"Great snakes, are there ghosts aboard this craft?" gasped O'Brien.

"De surest ting dat yo' know. Didn' dep apparitionise demselves to me one night when I was steering dis wessel?"

"Real ghosts?"

"Yas, sah. Dey had green faces all flamin' an' red eyes an'—an' green hair an' dey was mo' dan nineteen feet tall."

"Ochone! This is no place for me," declared O'Brien. "I guess I'll go and report to the captain."

"Yo' all better tell him dat ghostesses done it

same as dey stole de puddin'," said Pompey in parting.

"Garn wid ye. D'ye think I want ter be hanging on the yard arrum like a string of onions on a beam?" flung back O'Brien, as he hurried off.

"So they have discovered my disappearance," thought Raynor, "and so far they have got no clew to my whereabouts. This is just the opportunity to escape I was looking for. I'll sneak out of here to-night and get a boat and make off. Hold on though, would that be fair to Noddy?"

After some cogitation the lad decided that it would not do to leave the good-hearted Bowery boy behind.

"I'll find some means of communicating with him," he thought. "Maybe later in the day, when he comes forward to get potatoes, I can attract his attention. The potato bin is quite close at hand."

Not long before noon Noddy came forward

with a basket to the storage bin, where vegetables, such as potatoes, onions and turnips, were kept.

"H-i-s-t!" whispered Raynor through a crack.

"Now what under the sun was dat?" exclaimed the Bowery boy, looking about him, "sounded like a cat. But dere ain't no cats on dis craft. What was it?"

"Noddy, it's me—Raynor," breathed the hidden lad eagerly.

Noddy dropped his basket in his astonishment.

"Well, what d'ye know about dat," he exclaimed. "Pompey said dat de spooks had got cher."

"Not yet," laughed Raynor, "but I have a fine plan for an escape. Meet me at the galley at midnight to-night and we'll get away in one of the boats."

"Chee, youse don' rush tings at all, at all, do youse?" cried Noddy admiringly. "But I'm wid

yer. I'll swipe some grub to-day and hide it."

"By-the-way, that reminds me," exclaimed Raynor, "thanks for that chicken, but what about something to eat to-day?"

"I'll bring youse some grub. Don't worry. I'll make an excuse to git a bit of waste or rope out of that cubby hole. I got ter go now. De old man's lookin' forward. He mus' tink I've gone nuts talkin' ter myself."

He hurried off but an hour later brought Raynor a good meal, consisting of what was left over from the cabin dinner. The hidden lad ate it with a relish which was sharpened by the thought that that night he might be able to make good his escape.

That afternoon it began to grow rough, and Raynor's retreat was anything but comfortable. Water poured in every time the *Polly Ann* breasted a big wave. The lad was soon cold and shivering. But the hours passed somehow and at last, by the chiming of the ship's bell, Raynor

knew that the time had come to put his plan of escape into operation.

He crawled out upon the deck from his hiding place, feeling wet and stiff, and proceeded cautiously, for discovery was likely at any instant.

CHAPTER XVIII.

RAYNOR TO THE RESCUE.

As he made his way toward the now dark and deserted galley, Raynor noted, with regret, that it was a rough night. The schooner appeared at one minute to rush at what seemed to be a towering black wall but which Raynor knew was a wave.

It looked as if she must be submerged in the mass of water. But every time she rose gallantly and topped the crest of the giant combers. Storm sail was set, just sufficient to give the craft steerage way.

"Bother it all," muttered Raynor, "it seems that luck is always against us. Here I had everything planned for an ideal escape and now I doubt if it wouldn't be suicidal to venture forth in such a sea."

The schooner rushed up a wall of water and then coasted hissingly down the other side. Her lights shone out bravely like red and green jewels on either side of her bow. But it seemed that momentarily they would be drowned out.

Raynor clawed his way along the bucking, plunging deck, to the door of the galley. Here he gave three cautious knocks. The door opened and Noddy drew him in.

"Chee!" exclaimed the Bowery youth, when they were both safe inside, "dis is de wurstest night I ever seen. I don't see a ghost of a show of our escaping to-night. Why, de *Mauretania* 'ud have a hard time in dese waves, let alone a small boat."

"Still I hate to give it up," rejoined Raynor, "maybe the weather will moderate after awhile," he added hopefully.

"Don't look much like it. I'm gloomed fer fair," grumbled Noddy disconsolately.

They peeped out of the galley through a square port cut in the stern wall.

The decks were deserted but for the figure of the man at the wheel. He stood there in dripping yellow oilskins, gripping the helm and turning it this way or that as the great seas threatened the schooner. The binnacle light gleamed on his water-proof garments, making him look like a figure of bronze.

"I wish this storm would let up," observed Raynor at length.

"Maybe it'll get worser," said the pessimistic Noddy.

"I hope not. It's quite bad enough now. Anyhow, it's severe enough to make us call off all our plans."

"Yes, bad luck to it," was the reply.

There came, if possible, a louder shriek of the wind, and the schooner received a buffeting blow from a wave that made her stagger.

"Jumping juniper! What's up now?" cried Noddy in some alarm.

"Don't know. But something has happened," replied Raynor.

At the same moment came a shout from the helmsman. There was a rush of feet on deck. The boys could hear it plainly in one of those lulls that sometimes occur in the midst of even the fiercest storms. Lanterns flashed and questions and answers were bawled about the deck.

They saw Terror Carson, followed by his mate, rush up on deck. Then came a loud shout.

"All hands aft. The main-sail has gone!"

Raynor flung the door open.

"Come on," he cried but Noddy hung back.

"What fer? Dey might cotch yer," he said.

"I don't care. Some bad accident has happened. The schooner may be going down."

Indeed, from the wild yawing and pitching the craft was doing, it did seem as if she was mortally injured in some way. Thus urged by

Raynor, Noddy accompanied him toward the stern. There was a cluster of sailors about the after mast. It appeared, as well as Raynor could make out, that something had happened to the boom or the gaff.

As the two lads rushed sternward, not caring in their excitement if Raynor was seen or not, they saw that the stout canvas of the storm mainsail had been ripped from leach to peak. The great sail was flapping and snapping in the wind. It made a noise like the reports of cannon.

To make matters worse the great boom, unsupported, was sweeping back and forth across the decks with every roll of the disabled schooner, like a huge flail. It imperiled the lives of everybody who got in its pathway.

"Cut away the halyards and get that canvas loose!" bawled the captain.

Half a dozen sailors tried to, but the threshing boom drove them off.

"Get a line on that boom," bellowed the mate, "lash it back. Lively, now."

"It'll tear out the mast in a minute," shouted Carson.

The men labored heroically. But it was almost beyond human power to do anything with the volleying mass of canvas and the great boom. The captain and the mate shouted encouragingly to them but it appeared to do little good. Once or twice a man was almost lost over the side in the struggle for mastery.

The boys were now quite close to the whole wild scene. But nobody noticed them. Everyone was far too much engrossed in his own affairs. There was nothing they could do, but they stood by in readiness. To them it seemed as if every moment must be the schooner's last.

"Here, you," shouted Carson, stepping suddenly forward and addressing one of the men," what are you doing with those ropes? You're cutting the wrong ones."

He hastened forward to show what he meant. For the nonce he had forgotten the terrible sweep of the menacing boom. An instant later the big spar, sweeping in a huge semi-circle, swung straight at him.

"Look out!" roared the mate.

But Carson did not appear to hear.

"He'll be killed dead!" shrilled Noddy, looking on with horror.

"The boom!" shouted Raynor.

Suddenly Carson saw his danger. But he stepped aside too late. Another instant and his brains would have been battered out. But Raynor, with a flash of inspiration, averted a tragedy. Stooping down he seized a stout rope attached to the boom. In another instant he had it wrapped round a stout timber "bitt."

The rope strained as the force of the thresh-ing boom came on it. It drew taut as a violin string. But it held. The big swaying spar was checked within a foot of the captain's head.

Almost instantly a swarm of sailors swooped down on the boom and secured it strongly. It was then that Terror Carson stepped up to Raynor. His hand was held out.

"I thought you had escaped, boy," he said, "but it seems you were destined to save my life. I thank you."

The words were simple, but there was a curious break in the giant seal poacher's voice as he uttered them.

CHAPTER XIX.

SKULL ISLAND.

The sailors did not take long in making good the damage done to the sail. A new one was bent and then the schooner's action changed from a wallowing and rolling in the trough of the waves to a light skimming over them. The storm, now that the wind and waves appeared to have satisfied themselves by inflicting all the damage they could, seemed to die down.

"You had better go below to your own cabin," said the captain to Raynor when all had been made snug again. "You will hear no more of your attempt to get away."

Without waiting for a rejoinder, he was gone. Raynor turned dazedly to Noddy.

"I guess I'm in his good books again," he said.

"Well, why wouldn't yer be?" said the Bowery boy, "you saved his life."

At this juncture there was a shrill yell behind them. It was Pompey.

"By de holy poker, de ghostesses done brung back young Massa Raynor, des lak dey does mah puddin'," he cried, feeling Raynor's arm to make sure it was solid flesh and blood.

"Gollyumption," he exclaimed, "it's Massa Raynor, all right. Whar dose ghostesses done tak you-all to? Ah 'specs dey rides yo on a broomstick an all."

"I haven't been with any ghosts," laughed Raynor.

But Pompey put on a knowing look.

"Yo' kaint fool dis chile dat 'er way," he said, "ah knows too much of der mysteriferiousness of der prognosticatius. Dats de science ob ghostesses. Yo' all went to der same place as dat puddin' done go when de spooks took it."

It was no use to try to argue with the old

negro. Ever since the night the boys had tried to escape, Pompey's naturally superstitious mind had conceived the idea that the *Polly Ann* was "hanted." Nothing would drive it out of his head.

Terror Carson made no further advances to Raynor. In fact, the next day he hardly appeared to notice the boy who had saved his life by his quick wit and action. But Raynor did not worry about that. In fact, the less attention he received from the seal poacher, the better pleased he was.

The next day they found themselves enveloped in floes of ice. The wind blew hard and cold too. Suddenly, while they were crunching through the floating floes, the look-out gave a loud hail.

"Land ho!"

The shout was echoed by a score of voices. It brought a thrill to Raynor, who ran to the galley door. Across the ice floes he could make out a

rough, low-lying, rocky island. The waves dashed against some low cliffs in clouds of white spray. A few sea birds hovered, wheeling and screaming, above it.

Terror Carson hurried forward. He gave the island one glance and then said:

"That's Skull Island. There used to be good sealing there. But that's all done away with now. The beasts have gone to other places. There's water there, though. A perennial spring. I've a good mind to land and replenish the kegs."

"Why is it called Skull Island?" inquired Raynor, feeling, that as Carson appeared in a good mood, he might venture the question.

"On account of a fight that took place there some years ago," said Carson. "Rival sealers battled on the island and the conquerors stuck up the skulls of their enemies on poles."

"It is a dismal-looking place," said Raynor. "Does anybody live there?"

"No, it is uninhabited. Nothing but a few

sea-birds and, once in a while, some sealer, after water, goes there," was the rejoinder.

To the right, or western side of the island, there was a sort of lane or channel through the closely packed ice. It soon appeared that it was Terror Carson's intention to guide his craft through this to a mooring ground. He took the wheel himself, as he usually did in emergencies. Soon, sharp orders to the sail-handlers came crackling from his lips in a continuous volley.

"Easy on your main sheet."

"Aye, aye, sir."

"Blocks and tackles forward."

"All clear, sir."

It was ticklish work, for here and there the gnarled heads of black rocks showed above the surface of the water. If one had penetrated the *Polly Ann's* hull there would have been an end to her then and there. But Terror Carson steered her, with an expressionless face and consummate skill, past every peril. At last they lay

off a rocky cove. The leadsman in the bow sang out that there was plenty of water.

"Let go the anchor," bellowed Carson.

The cable roared out, and for the first time in many days, the *Polly Ann* lay at rest.

Raynor leaned over the rail, not having anything to do just then, and watched the island with a strange fascination. Even its sinister name did not detract from his desire to go ashore and give it a thorough exploration. In time to come Raynor was to grow to know that island well and regret the day he ever saw it.

CHAPTER XX.

JACK TRIES OUT HIS INVENTION.

"Icebergs ahead."

The look-out in the crow's nest of the *Thespis* sang out the warning sharply. Officers and men of the smart revenue cutter were instantly on the alert.

"Where away?" came from the bridge.

"Two points off the starboard bow, sir," was the response.

The officer leveled his binoculars on a huge mass of ice about two miles off. It glittered like polished steel. It rose into two huge points like the steeples of a cathedral. Jack emerged from his wireless cabin and secured from the officer the latitude and longitude.

Then he returned to his instruments, and within half an hour every ship within reaching dis-

tance on the Atlantic track knew of the great berg and its position, rate of progression and probable course. For some days this had been Jack's daily work.

He went forward to the bridge to make his report on the ships he had warned. Captain Simms was there eyeing the steely blue ice mountain.

"I'd like to dynamite that fellow just as I would a derelict that imperiled navigation," he said.

"I've been thinking the same thing, sir," said Jack respectfully, "and I've thought up a new method of doing it."

"What's that, my lad?"

"I could blow that berg up by wireless!"

The commander looked at the boy as if he thought Jack had taken leave of his senses or had had the temerity to joke with his commanding officer. But Jack was never more serious in his life.

"I mean it, sir," he said steadily.

"Explain yourself, Ready. I must confess that your statement set me aback."

"I've been figuring out a method," rejoined the boy, "of firing torpedoes, guns and mines by wireless. I think I have it perfected, but if you would permit an experiment on that big iceberg yonder, it would be a magnificent opportunity to put my theories to the test."

"Jove, boy, I've half a mind to do it. To destroy that berg is certainly in the line of duty."

"Undoubtedly, sir. If you will allow me six men and a boat and the necessary explosives I think I can guarantee to blow that berg into smithereens within an hour by a simple pressure of the key in my wireless-room."

"It sounds incredible—yet, great guns and little fishes, lad,—I'm going to let you try. Harley!"

The coxswain hailed, stepped up, and saluted smartly. "Aye, aye, sir."

"Is the Number Two cutter in good condition?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very well. You will take a crew of six and report to Mr. Ready, here, for his orders."

The man saluted and hurried off. Before long the crew and the cutter were ready. In the meantime the explosives Jack wanted were brought on deck and then loaded in the boat. This done, Jack vanished into his cabin and emerged before long carrying a coil of copper wire and several powerful batteries.

"Now, if I could have two extra oars," he said, briskly addressing Commander Simms, who had gazed on the preparations with interest but had asked no questions.

"All right, my boy. I've no idea what you want them for but you shall have them. Coxswain, get two more oars."

"Yes, sir."

At last all was ready, and the boat shot away

from the side of the cutter. The six brawny jackies making up the crew pulled for the berg with quick, strong strokes. This trip was a welcome diversion from the monotony of the iceberg patrol duty. They made good time over the water, and soon the berg was reached.

A close view showed that a sort of valley bisected it between the towering steeples of ice that rose at each end. It was an easy matter to scramble up on the low lying ledges of the edge of the berg. Half the party landed, while those remaining in the boat handed up the explosives and other apparatus to them. At last everything was ready. Jack ordered the men still remaining in the boat on to the berg.

They obeyed with alacrity, all eagerness to know what was coming next. Among the supplies brought were six crowbars, for the ice-patrol craft carried every kind of tool for dealing with ice.

Jack set the men to work digging holes,—like

post holes in the ice at regular intervals right across the valley. When this had been done an oar was set up at each end of the row of holes.

"Now we'll load 'em," said Jack, and into each hole a "capped" charge of explosive was placed, being tamped down carefully.

When this had been done the copper wire was stretched from one oar to the other like a telegraph wire. From this main wire branch, wires were led to each of the loaded holes and there carefully attached to the fulminate of mercury caps. When all this had been done to Jack's satisfaction, he electrified the system with his batteries, attaching them to the main wire.

"Now we'll pull back to the ship," he said.

"Beg pardon, sir, but ain't you going to touch off all that dynamite?" asked the coxswain.

"And blow ourselves up as well as the berg? Not much," laughed Jack, "come on, boys, give way lively now, and before long you'll see fireworks."

In a short time they were back on the ship. Jack reported to Captain Simms that everything was in readiness for the long distance explosion. All eyes turned curiously on the lad as he walked aft to the wireless room, for word had spread through the ship of the experiment that was to be tried.

Jack tested up his instruments carefully. Then he adjusted the dynamo for an extra heavy current of "juice." When this had been done, he sat down coolly at the key.

"Now watch the berg!" he shouted, and the cry was taken up and passed along the decks.

He pressed down the key. There was a snap and a crackle as the live flame leaped between its points. Far above from the aërials, an invisible wave of electricity rolled.

It struck the copper wire on the berg and rushed along it and down the wires leading to the capped explosives.

Simultaneously there was a mighty roar.

"There she goes," yelled the sailors.

The berg was seen to split in half and then dissolve as if it had been melted. Five minutes later nothing was to be seen where it had been but a cloud of yellowish smoke.

The pressure of a finger on a wireless key two miles away had destroyed the titanic berg and left not a trace of its dangerous existence.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE WRECK OF THE "POLLY ANN."

To his disappointment, Raynor was not allowed on the boats that took the water party ashore on Skull Island. He and Noddy had to content themselves with watching the operations ashore.

It was night when the work had been completed and the casks all filled. Terror Carson, therefore, decided to remain at anchor off the island all night. This was against the advice of his mate, who counseled making for the open sea.

"I don't like the look of the weather," he said, regarding certain yellowish castellated clouds that hung on the northern horizon. But Terror Carson only laughed.

"This is a snug enough berth," he declared.

"We'll lie here till daylight. Then for a dash across the boundary and some fine Canadian seals."

But by midnight it was seen that the mate's advice had been good. Without warning on the barometer, a furious storm swept down on the anchored schooner. She began to drag. Two more anchors were let go and she held securely. But now another peril appeared.

Huge fields of drift ice and growlers, driven from the north by the storm, drove down on the *Polly Ann.* The ice crunched against her sides like rasping teeth. It seemed as if the forces of nature had combined to destroy her.

The stout timbers of her hull cracked ominously under the terrific pressure. There was no sleep on board. All hands were on deck. Terror Carson, more perturbed than Raynor had ever seen him, strode the deck as if distracted. The schooner was the apple of his eye. But now

it appeared that she was doomed, and through his fault.

There was nothing to be done. A sickly gray dawn showed the schooner surrounded by ice for miles. Almost as far as the eye could reach, in fact.

"We'll never get out of here alive," declared the sailors.

"Nothing but bad luck has followed us on this trip," was another remark heard among them.

All that day the *Polly Ann* held together. Terror Carson grew more confident.

"The old hooker will weather it yet," he declared. But the mate shook his head.

"She'll leave her bones here," he said.

Carson turned on him like an infuriated wild beast.

"One more word like that and I'll knock what serves you for brains out of your thick skull," he snarled, and fell to pacing the poop.

Completely tired out, Raynor sought his bunk

that night and fell into a deep sleep of exhaustion. He had not closed his eyes the night before and even the perilous position of the ship could not have kept him on his feet.

When he awakened, sunshine was streaming into the port of his cabin.

"Gracious!" he gasped. "I must be late. Carson will half kill me."

He hustled into some clothes and emerged into the outer cabin. Almost instantly he stepped into water which the tilt of the ship had prevented penetrating into his cabin. The water almost covered the main cabin floor. The tilt of the ship made it deeper on the opposite side of the cabin.

"The ice has crushed the *Polly Ann's* ribs," exclaimed the boy. "She is doomed."

He rushed on deck. The next instant he stood still at the top of the companionway, stricken with stupefaction.

The decks, usually at that hour alive with men,

were deserted. Not a soul was to be seen either fore or aft.

What had happened? Then Raynor's eyes wandered to the davits where the big whale boats used in sealing, generally hung.

They were empty!

The boats were gone!

In a flash he realized what had occurred. The crushing of the *Polly Ann* had happened in the night. Knowing that she was doomed the crew had taken to the boats, which could push a way through the drift ice and left the ship.

"Oh, the cowards! the cowards!" cried Raynor, in an agony of anger and apprehension.

The schooner was sinking under his feet and he had no means of escape. He was doomed to go to the bottom of the Arctic Sea in her without the chance to make a struggle for his life. For a few minutes he almost went mad. He rushed up and down the decks shouting and rav-

ing like a lunatic. Then he suddenly came to his senses.

He must be calm. There was nothing to be gained by losing his head. Never had he needed the cool use of all his faculties so urgently as he did now. He sat down on one of the knightheads forward and concentrated his mind on his situation.

Suddenly he sprang to his feet with a shout.

"What a blind idiot I've been!" he cried aloud, "the dories. I never thought of them."

It was curious but true, that in his excitement the lad had entirely forgotten, for the time being, the half dozen dories "nested" on the after deck. Now, however, the recollection of them affected him like a tonic. He began bustling about making his preparations to leave the *Polly Ann* to her ocean grave.

CHAPTER XXII.

FOOTPRINTS ON THE SAND.

From the galley and store-rooms he collected a good stock of provisions and such utensils as he thought he was likely to need. For the boy had come to a hasty conclusion that he would take up quarters on Skull Island for the present, at any rate. He knew that whalers and sealers sometimes touched there, and he might stand a chance of being rescued if he remained there instead of venturing, in a flimsy dory, on unknown seas.

But when he had the dory all loaded a difficulty he had not thought of in his haste presented itself.

How was he to launch it?

This problem bothered him not a little for some time. But at last he solved it. At each end

of the dory was a "becket" or loop of rope. Raynor unfastened the throat halyards of the mainsail and hooked them into these loops. Then it was an easy matter to hoist the dory aloft by the aid of block and tackle. The *Polly Ann* had heeled so far over by this time, that once the dory was in the air, it swung out over the water, to which Raynor quickly lowered it.

Then he dropped over the side and on board his little craft.

"Good-bye, old *Polly Ann,*" he exclaimed, as he took up the oars and began rowing through the drifting ice for the shore of Skull Island. "You saved my life, but even so I can't say I've any particular love for you."

With this exordium he set to work at his rowing in earnest. It was hard work but at last he grounded his boat on a strip of sandy beach.

"Welcome to Skull Island," he said to himself. "Let's hope our stay here will be a short one."

He dragged the boat up as far as he could on

the beach, and then unloaded his various goods. They made quite a pile.

"I'm a regular Arctic Robinson Crusoe," he exclaimed, half aloud.

He had hardly made the remark when he started violently. His resemblance to Robinson Crusoe was even closer than he had thought.

On the close-packed sand of the beach were the footprints of a man!

There was somebody else on the island then. For a minute he half suspected that one of the landing party, who had come ashore for water, might have made the tracks. But this solution of the matter was negatived by the fact that they had landed on the other side of the island, and had been too busy to roam about.

Who could this man be? Captain Carson had told him the island was uninhabited. Certainly nobody with the landing party had noticed any human being on it or they would have been sure to have mentioned it.

Raynor began to feel uncomfortable. He had no weapon, and the strange man might be hostile. Certainly he must be an out of the ordinary individual to live on such a forsaken island. And why had he not appeared when the schooner anchored?

"Maybe he is some desperate criminal hiding here from the law," mused Raynor. "In that case my life will be in danger."

He traced the footsteps till they became lost in loose sand. But as nearly as he could judge, the man had walked along the beach, and then turned inland.

Raynor felt badly shaken by his discovery. It was not pleasant to contemplate sharing an island with a man who might prove a dangerous enemy. However, there was no help for it. The *Polly Ann* was sinking and the island was his only refuge.

He looked about him. Back of the beach the island shores sloped upward abruptly, shutting

out any view of the interior. Gnarled shrubs and bushes grew among the rocks. They were twisted into all sorts of grotesque shapes by the rigors of the Arctic winds. From the beach he could see the hull of the ill-fated *Polly Ann.*

The schooner had canted over more but did not appear to have sunk any lower in the water.

"If only she'd keep afloat I'd go right back to her," muttered Raynor.

He fell to examining the footmarks again. They were very large and made with heavy, clumsy boots to judge by their appearance.

"The man who made these tracks must be a big fellow, more than a match for me in physical strength," reflected Raynor.

He decided not to penetrate into the interior of the island but to set up a camp where he had landed, at all events, for the present. He had a half formed plan in his mind, too, of rowing out to the *Polly Ann* and getting more provisions before she finally sank. He had brought

some canvas along to make a tent and he constructed quite a snug shelter by turning the boat upside down and supporting it on stones. This made a water-tight roof over which he threw the canvas. Next he collected wood and built a fire. It was not till that moment that he recollected that he would have to go to the other side of the island for water.

He did not much like the task. He might encounter the man of the island and be attacked by him. Still he thought an encounter was bound to occur before long, if he remained. So, cutting a stout club from the bushes, and taking up a bucket he had brought, he set out for the spring.

By this time it was growing dusk, so much longer than he realized had his preparations taken him. He started off, walking briskly, and had almost reached the part of the island where he knew the spring was located, when he gave a violent start.

Ahead of him, standing on a rock as if gazing at something, was the figure of a man!

CHAPTER XXIII.

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.

The man had his back turned to him. But at the sight of him, Raynor gave such a start that he dropped his bucket. It fell on the rocks with a loud clatter.

At the sound the man on the rocks turned suddenly. Then he uttered a loud yell and leaped from the boulder. To Raynor's amazement he began running at top speed away from him.

"Hanged if he isn't more scared of me than I am of him," thought the boy in astonishment. All his fear of the unknown man vanished now.

"Hey, there!" he shouted, "don't run! Stop!"

"Wow-ow!" yelled the fleeing man, and ran faster than ever.

"I want to speak to you!" bawled Raynor, beginning to lose his temper.

"He must be crazy," he thought, "but I'll catch him and find out what is the matter with him if I have to chase him all over this island."

He picked up his bucket and set off after the man. It was hard work over the rocks and uneven ground. But Raynor, who had won several cups as a "miler" at school, soon saw that he was gaining on the other. At length only a few feet separated them.

Suddenly the man gave a yell of piercing quality and tripped over a stone. In a jiffy he was sprawling on the ground. Raynor grasped his club more tightly and rushed upon him.

"What do you mean by running away from me like this?" he demanded, "what's the matter with you, anyhow."

"Oh, oh, Mister Ghost, don' hurt me. Ah didn' mean no harm by coming on you-alls island. No, indeed, sah, I didn'. Ah des——"

"Pompey, by all that's wonderful!" cried Ray-

nor with a glad laugh. "Get up, you idiot. I'm no ghost."

Pompey, for it was the black cook of the *Polly Ann,* sat up with his eyes as big as saucers.

"Gollyumption, if it ain't Massa Raynor."

"Yes, and a fine chase you led me. What was the matter with you?"

"Ah done thought Noddy an' mahself was alone on dis island. Den ah see yo coming an' ah thought it was a ghostess. Ah done heard the rattle of chains jes' as plain!"

"Those weren't chains. That was my bucket that I dropped. I guess I was as scared as you for a minute because I, too, thought I was alone. But tell me, is Noddy really here?"

"He sholly is."

"How did you come ashore?"

"In one ob de dories. Dey done didn' leave us nuffin' else. I was awakened in de night by de awfullest shoutin' an' yellin'. Dey say de ship sinkin'—de ice done punched hole in her. But

de boats was crowded an' dey wouldn' let me or Noddy on board. We got lef' behin' an' Noddy, he calkerlate that bin as you slep' in de cabin yo' mus' hab been one of the fustest in de boats."

"I guess I slept too soundly," rejoined Raynor, "but where are you camped?"

"Right ober de top ob dat lil hill yander. We fin' a hut dere built by some sealer, an it's right handy to de spring, too."

"Come on, we'll go right over there. By-the-way, Pompey, have you roamed around the island much?"

"Why yais, dis mawning early I was ober to de udder side. Ah go to look at de *Polly Ann* 'cos it wuz dark when we leabed her."

"Then it was the track of your foot I saw on the shore," laughed Raynor, much relieved, and he explained to the mystified Pompey the "Robinson Crusoe" incident.

As they neared the hut, Noddy came running

to meet them. As he saw who was with Pompey, he broke into an exultant yell.

"Whoopee! Gee, ain't I glad! Bill, old socks, I thought you wus off in de boats wid Terror an' dat crew. Come on in an' tell us all about it."

Raynor found a cheery fire burning in an old iron stove inside the hut, which was lighted by a ship's lantern Pompey had had the foresight to bring from the schooner. It looked quite cozy. Pompey soon cooked a good supper and made boiling hot tea, to which they all did ample justice.

Then they all had to tell their stories over again, both the boys and Pompey, too, shouting with laughter over the wild chase the frightened colored man had led Raynor across the island.

"Some day you'll see a real blown-in-the-panel ghost," chuckled Noddy, "and then you'll jes' naturally lie down and die of scare."

"Ah seen ghostesses, real ones afore now," affirmed Pompey with dignity, "ah see two ob dem

on b'oard dat *Polly Ann*. Right den ah knowed dat dat l'il schooner wuz goin' ter git busted. Yassah."

It was agreed that in the morning they should all go to Raynor's camp by boat, and bring his provisions and so forth, round to Camp Hope, as they decided to christen the hut. After the exertions of the day, they were disinclined to sit up late, and having made up a roaring fire, they turned into their blankets, of which Pompey had brought a big supply, and were soon asleep.

It must have been after midnight that the boys were awakened by an appalling yell from Pompey.

"Help! Murder! Help!" shrieked the negro.

"What's the matter?" shouted the boys.

"Oh, the hants! The hants wid de fiery eyes," bawled the colored man, burying his head in his blankets and kicking up his heels in an agony of alarm.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A FRIGHT IN THE NIGHT.

"For de love of Mike, what's de matter?"

Noddy yelled out the inquiry above the uproar.

"Look! Noddy, look!" cried Raynor suddenly.

Circling round the room, at about six feet above the ground, were two glowing fiery eyes.

Even the boys were alarmed at this. Suddenly, too, their scalps tightened as a diabolical scream rang through the hut. It sounded like the wail of a lost soul.

"Jiminy crickets!" cried Noddy, "I never believed in spooks before but I do now."

The circling eyes glared at them and then dashed on through the darkness. Again came that piercing scream.

"I can't stand this," gasped Raynor, "light the lantern."

"I-I-fergit where I put de matches," chattered Noddy.

Luckily, Raynor had some in his pockets. In a moment he had the lantern lighted, and the place flooded with radiance. Then it was that both boys looked rather shamefaced. What had alarmed them so was nothing more than a big white arctic owl that had blundered into the hut through the unglazed window. As the light flared up, it uttered another wild shriek, and dashed out the same way it had entered.

"Well, what d'ye know about that?" exclaimed Noddy. "I thought sure that fer once we had a real sure-enuff ghost on our hands. Get up there, Pompey, your ghost was only an owl."

Pompey, his black face still twitching with alarm, drew his head out of the blankets.

"It weren't no hant?" he asked tremulously.

"No, only an old owl, aren't you ashamed of yourself?" said Raynor.

"Well, sir, it 'peared to me from what I could obfustacate dat I wasn' de onlyest one in dis hut dat was scared inter an ager chill, no, sir."

"I guess he's got it on us dere," laughed Noddy. "You looked as white as a sheet of paper when you lighted that lamp, Raynor."

"I'll admit I couldn't account for those fiery eyes or that terrible scream," rejoined Raynor with a grin.

They hung a blanket across the window so as to guard against any more midnight intruders. Soon they were all asleep again. No more untoward incidents occurred, and at daybreak they were astir.

After breakfast they took the dory, in which Pompey and Noddy had landed, and rowed round to Raynor's camp, which they found undisturbed. Looking seaward, they met with a surprise. They had fully expected to see that the *Polly Ann* had

sunk. But she lay just as she had on the previous day. In fact, although the boys did not know it just then, the current had swung her hull upon a submerged reef which kept her from sinking any deeper.

It was not a long task to dismantle Raynor's camp and set his dory afloat. The load of provisions, etc., was divided between the two boats.

"What's the matter with paying a visit to the *Polly Ann?*" suggested Raynor when they had finished. "It's odd that she's still afloat.

"We might get a chance to get some more grub," added Noddy. "We need all we can get with three mouths to feed and no knowing how long we'll be stuck in dis place."

So it was arranged to row out to the stranded vessel. Once alongside, it did not take the boys long to discover the reason of the *Polly Ann's* still being on the top of the water.

"If bad weather doesn't come, she'll stay here

indefinitely," declared Raynor. "We can visit her here every day and get what we want."

"Dat's so," agreed Noddy, "it's a lucky ting dat reef wuz dere."

They worked briskly and busily about the schooner and soon had the dories loaded as heavily as they dared. Another thing they noticed that pleased them. The drift ice was on the move.

On every side came sharp reports like pistol shots as it broke up and drifted, or else crashed together. But it was moving southward with a vast concerted motion that meant that ships could approach the island, and was a welcome sign to the beleagured adventurers.

By noon they were ready for the row back to Camp Hope, which was accomplished without incident. While Pompey cooked a bountiful dinner, the boys scrambled to a rocky peak near the hut.

"We'll put up a flag here," declared Raynor, "that will be visible from all sides of the island."

This necessitated another trip to the schooner after the noon-day meal. The boys towed back an extra spar, which made a fine flagstaff. To it, before they set it up, they nailed the United States ensign upside down.

"Anyone seeing that will know there are shipwrecked mariners here," declared Raynor when the job was finished.

"Well, dey kaint come too quick fo' dis chile," grinned Pompey.

But the weary days went by and no sign of aid came. They spent the time transferring all they could from the *Polly Ann* to the shore while the fine weather lasted, for the schooner was showing signs of breaking up, and the first gale would demolish her.

"If only there was some way of communicating with the outside world," sighed Raynor one evening after supper, when they had all sat silent for a time. There was no need for anyone to ask the other what he was thinking of.

"Gee, yes," exclaimed Noddy, "if only we had one of dem wireless chatter machines we—what's de matter?" for Raynor had slapped his thigh loudly and sprung to his feet with a whoop.

"What a chump I am," he fairly shouted.

"I know dat, but what's de special occasion?" grinned Noddy.

"Why, we have got one."

"One what—a fit?"

"No a wireless outfit."

"Chee, you must have bats in your belfry. What are youse goin' ter do, wireless wid yer fingers?"

"No, with a proper apparatus."

Noddy rapped his head with his knuckles in a significant way. Then he sighed profoundly.

"Too bad and him so young," he said to Pompey.

"I'm not crazy," cried Raynor joyfully. "There's a complete wireless set on the *Polly*

Ann! I'd forgotten all about it up to now, and what's more, I can use it."

"What's dat?" cried Noddy, "say, pal, give us yer flipper. I see where we do a sneak from this island before we're a week older. Me fer de wireless every time."

CHAPTER XXV.

POMPEY LEARNS ABOUT WIRELESS.

Bright and early the next morning, you may depend upon it, the boys were at work. They experienced some little difficulty in locating where Terror Carson had kept the instruments. But they ultimately found them in his cabin which, luckily, was not on the submerged side of the tilted vessel.

A long, slender spar was towed from the schooner to Camp Hope. This was to act as an aërial. Raynor experienced a good deal of difficulty in establishing his station. While he was a competent operator, thanks to Jack's untiring instruction, he was unfamiliar with connecting the instrument. Luckily, however, an instruction book formed a part of the set and this aided him not a little in his task.

Power for the current was supplied by a device especially made for sailing ships where electric or steam power is not available. It consisted of a dynamo and batteries run and charged by operating pedals very much as is done on a bicycle. Raynor found that he could get ample current with this device.

It was a great day when all was ready for the test. The instruments had been installed inside the hut. Outside rose the tall, slender mast supporting the aërials. Raynor was not without a thrill as he took his place at the key. Noddy and Pompey stared at him as if he had been a wizard. He pressed down the key, and the great spark jumped with a hissing explosion between the points.

"Wow!" yelled Pompey, in great alarm, "look at de green snake. Will him bite Massa Raynor?"

"He would if you put your fingers on it," laughed Raynor, "you'd get a shock that would

lay you out for a week—so be warned and never monkey with the apparatus."

"No, sah, deed ah won' do dat ting," Pompey assured him with a positive shake of the head. "Dis chile 'ull certainly not trouble dat dere spatteratus no time."

"How's she woik?" asked Noddy.

"Alright as far as I can make out. I'm sending out the S.O.S. call now with all the current I can get."

"The S.O.S., what's that mean?"

"Why, it's a call for help."

"I see. Means 'Sunk or Sinkin,' eh?"

"Something like that," smiled Raynor.

"Do dat lilly spark snake send out words jes' like dat?" asked Pompey.

"Yes; it transmits dots and dashes to the aërials and then they form electric waves which, in time, strike other aërials and give the message."

"All dat talk about overalls done mystify me,"

muttered Pompey, "dat 'lectricity go charging frum your overalls till it hits some other feller's overalls, is dat it?"

"Something like it," rejoined Raynor, "but it's aërials, not overalls."

"Oh, hair oils," said Pompey, "now ah understan's puffickly. De 'lectricity frum yo' hair-oils hits de udder hair-oils an den de udder feller hears de same spots and splashes dat you've bin a sendin' out."

"That's it, but make it dots and dashes instead of spots and splashes."

Raynor had hardly expected an answer to his first call. But he was a little discouraged when night came and he had received no answer from space. He wondered if he had set the apparatus up correctly. He had followed closely the directions in the book. Still, he might have made a mistake, and a mistake would be fatal to the success of his wireless.

He could see that Noddy and Pompey were

skeptical about the wireless plant working at all. When no answer came their faith plainly began to waver. He spent the evening figuring out their exact latitude and longitude on the chart he had brought from Captain Carson's cabin. It gave their position exactly and Raynor memorized it so as to be able to flash it out when the time came.

"Well, all I've got to say is that if wese is dependin' on dat mouse cage uv wire and dat 'lectric spark to git us offen de island, we got a mighty slim chance uv ever giving the good-bye," said Noddy after supper.

"Dat lilly snake seem pretty ter look at but dem hair-oils don' seem ter be circumambulatin' dose spots an' splashes in jes' de way dey ought to," added Pompey.

"Oh, have a little patience," said Raynor, "we'll attract attention in time. The atmospheric conditions may not have been just right."

"When you tink dem hysteric conditions will be

salubrious fer dem hair-oils?" inquired Pompey.

"Well, you noticed to-day that it was rather foggy. The Hertzian waves don't travel as well in such weather."

"I 'spose dey calls 'em Hurtsome waves on account ob de way dat snaky spark 'ull hurt yo' if yo' grab it," said Pompey.

"The wireless transmission is usually better at night," went on Raynor. "I mean to try again before we turn in."

But his efforts met with no better success than during the day. Tired out, and not a little disappointed, he went to bed where even his vexation over his failure failed to keep him awake.

When he opened his eyes in the morning the first thing he saw was Pompey bending over the wireless table and looking with eyes that popped out of his head at the twin "telephone" receivers that lay there.

"What's the matter, Pompey?" asked the boy sleepily.

"Ah dunno. Dere's something mighty obstropulous about dis here contrivance. I tink dere's a spook or a hoodoo in it."

"Don't talk such nonsense. What's the matter?"

"Ah dunno. But ah'm plum scared."

"Don't be absurd. Tell me what's up?"

"Whay dis yer telafoam looking ting am makin' queer noises."

"WHAT!"

"It jes keeps clicking and tapping lak dere was suthin' alive in it."

Raynor was out of his blankets in a flash. His eyes blazed with excitement as he dashed across the room.

"Why, you Senegambian chump," he yelled, "that's somebody trying to talk to us!"

CHAPTER XXVI.

A JOYOUS MESSAGE.

Jack found the life on board the ice-patrol cutter much to his liking. There was almost constant work for him, for the southern drift of the ice was unusually heavy that year.

Many a liner had reason to thank the constant vigilance of the ice-patrol craft. Across miles of ocean, through space, there would flash, from Jack's key, the message that warned of the white terrors of the north. The knowledge thus gained enabled the ship receiving it either to alter her course so as to steer clear of danger, or to be on the lookout for bergs or drift ice.

Nor was the work of the *Thespis* limited to this. On her long "beat" she found occasion two or three times to render aid to the crews of ice-battered sailing vessels. Jack's unique device for

blowing up icebergs by wireless was tested many times and was never found wanting. That spring it did invaluable service, all of which was duly mentioned in Captain Simms' report to Washington, when that came to be made.

As the spring wore on and the latter part of May approached, the "patrol" of the *Thespis* lay further and further north. One day Jack received a flash from Washington, relayed from northern stations. The message gave the *Thespis* additional work to do.

"Watch international sealing boundary closely," it read, "apprehend all poachers. Learn Terror Carson on schooner *Polly Ann* in your vicinity. Try all means to capture him."

But although a sharp lookout was kept, nothing was seen of the trig schooner, and little did Jack imagine what ties of friendship bound him to one of the *Polly Ann's* company. And so the days slipped by, with occasional excitement to vary the routine, and the time was not far off when dan-

ger of icebergs for that year would be passed and gone, and the *Thespis* would put back to New York on regular duty.

When that occurred, Jack's days with the iceberg patrol would be numbered, and he had found the work so interesting that he rather regretted this. Yet he knew that he was far from the top of the ladder yet and that he had many a step to climb in the days to come. On his return he knew that Mr. Jukes would be back, and he was hoping for an appointment on one of the great new liners of the company.

However, these were all day dreams, and Jack was a practical youth. Then, too, a good deal of spare time was occupied perfecting his portable wireless. He had given it several tests and reaped a satisfying reward for his months of labor over it when he discovered that it worked well up to a radius of 156 miles. The weakest point about it was the hand-driven dynamo. But just at present Jack saw no way to remedy this

without increasing the weight of the contrivance so much as to impair its portability.

On the night that young Raynor, far off on lonely Skull Island, sent out his calls after a day of vain efforts at communication, the *Thespis* was further to the north than she had yet cruised. Jack was unusually tired after a day of hard work, for several icebergs and fields and not a few growlers had been sighted, and he had been kept very busy sending out warnings and answering questions flung at him from all along the Atlantic track.

But at last the long day was over and his reports neatly written out and posted in the big "Berg Book" or log. He was at liberty to turn in, for if icebergs were sighted during the night by the watch, he knew that he would be at once notified so that he could spread the warning broadcast.

As usual, he slept soundly, but he was troubled by dreams. They were of Raynor. With re-

markable vividness he saw his chum adrift on a sea of ice surrounded by perils. Then the scene shifted, and Raynor was on a small vessel in a furious storm. Jack saw the little craft lifted on giant billows and harassed by pounding ice masses. Then came a terrific crash and the small vessel broke up. For a flash, Jack saw Raynor swimming heroically in the boiling waves and then—he awakened with a cry of alarm.

"Gracious, what a dream," he muttered. "I'm glad I don't have a nightmare often."

He looked at the clock on the bulkhead. It was time to turn out. As was his custom, Jack inspected the "tell-tale" tape of the wireless before he did anything else. This tape is an automatic contrivance that works under a "tapper" connected with the receiving part of the wireless. An inked roller checks off on it any dots and dashes that may have come over the wire while the operator was otherwise engaged. To anyone

who can read code, therefore, it forms a complete record.

Jack picked up the tape in a rather perfunctory way. He expected to find nothing on it but the usual inquiries about bergs reported earlier and so forth.

But hardly had he cast his eyes on it this morning than he almost dropped it again as if it had been red-hot.

Marked on it over and over again were these symbols:

... .
S O S

"Jove," cried the boy. "Jove! The distress signal in Morse. It must have been coming in the early part of the night. And what's this."

His trained eye skimmed over other markings on the inked tape. To him the array of dots and dashes was as plain as print.

"We are marooned on a small island. Skull Island. Send help." Then followed the bearings

of the island just as Raynor had taken them from the course pricked off on Terror Carson's chart.

Jack, without waiting even to transmit a report to Captain Simms, switched on the transmitting current. Then he began to make the wireless crack and whistle as flash after flash volleyed out at his crisp decisive handling of the key.

"Skull Island! Skull Island! Skull Island!" he crackled out from the aërials of the *Thespis*.

But what appeared to be an eternity passed and no answer came. Jack had some time since made his report to Captain Simms, who had informed him that Skull Island was a speck on the map some 250 miles to the north-west of their present position. The whole ship buzzed with excitement. Every now and then an officer's head would be poked in the door of the wireless room to know if any answer had been received yet.

"It is the most unique situation I ever heard

of," declared Captain Simms. "I am half inclined to believe it may be some trick. How could anyone, on such a forsaken spot as Skull Island, which is a mere mass of rocks and stunted shrubs, have a wireless station?"

But Jack kept patiently at his task. His young assistant, Bill Higgins, helped him as much as he could. Higgins was a young sailor who had shown aptitude for wireless work and had been "broken in" under Jack's predecessor.

"Anything yet?" he asked as he reëntered the wireless room after scurrying forward with a message to Captain Simms that the air was still silent as the grave.

Jack gave a negative sign.

"I'm going to try more juice," he said, "there's a lot of interference this morning. I've got to tune it out. Fix up that weeding-out circuit like a good fellow."

"The tertiary one?" asked Higgins.

"That's the idea. If we can't reach them with that we can't get them at all."

Higgins took the necessary steps to bring into play an added circuit which would render the tuning of the transmitting instruments twice as sharp as with the ordinary loose-coupled transformer. The spark cracked and snapped like a whip lash.

All at once Jack gave a shout.

"Got 'em, by hookey! I got 'em!"

There was a brief silence while his fingers dashed off the message that came from space in answer to his insistent demands.

"We are marooned on Skull Island."

"Yes, yes, go on."

"There was a bad shipwreck. The schooner *Polly Ann* was smashed by ice."

"The *Polly Ann?*" queried Jack, with a flash of recollection. "Terror Carson's ship?"

"That's the one, but Terror Carson and all his crew got safe away in the boats. They left three

of us here. We have plenty of food and there is water, but the island is uninhabited."

"Who are you, members of Terror Carson's poaching crew? This is the ice patrol cutter *Thespis*."

"No; we were on board against our wills. We are Noddy Nipper, Pompey, a negro cook, and William Raynor, lately of the freighter *Cambodian*."

The next instant young Higgins had reason to exclaim as he stared in amazement at the usually self-contained Jack Ready.

"He's gone crazy!"

For the young wireless man of the *Thespis* was doing a war-dance and banging his key as if he would break it off at one and the same moment. The crackling, whanging spark made an accompaniment for his wild caperings.

"What's the matter? Can I do anything? Shall I go for the doctor?" inquired Higgins when he had recovered his breath.

"Doctor nothing!" shouted Jack, and with his free hand he smote young Higgins a blow between the shoulders that made that youth cough and his eyes water.

"Old Billy Raynor's come back! Come back from the grave via wireless, by all that's wonderful!"

CHAPTER XXVII.

A CRASH IN THE FOG.

Making northward was a smart gasolene craft motored with a powerful engine. She was the power tender of the *Thespis,* a taut, seaworthy craft, especially designed for the work of the revenue service, and she had taken part in many a chase after smugglers and other would-be evaders of Uncle Sam's laws.

But just now her errand was one of rescue and mercy. The machine gun at her bow was swathed in its waterproof covers and the bullet-proof housing of the engine was not in place. She was making eighteen miles an hour on her way to Skull Island and her motors were turning as steadily and truly as if they knew that they were on a mission of deep importance.

There were three persons on board. In the

bow sat Jack Ready, his hand on the steering wheel and ever and anon taking a glance at the compass before him. Amidships, pipe in mouth, was Matt Sherry, the engineer, lovingly feeding his motors oil and "mothering" them with waste and fussing. Astern, preparing a meal on a gasolene stove was Hank Merryweather, a stalwart tar from the *Thespis* detailed to accompany the relief expedition.

When Jack had made known to Captain Simms the plight of Raynor and the others, the commander of the *Thespis* had easily read in the boy's excited words his intense desire to proceed to the aid of the castaways at once. But there was a difficulty in the way, as the captain explained. Duty held the *Thespis* to the iceberg patrol. She could not wander from her post of duty.

Captain Simms suggested sending out a message to other ships and also to the government stations ashore and having a rescue expedition

despatched from the most convenient points. But Jack had already got a plan in his head, and at the risk of offending Captain Simms, he could not help but broach it.

"It's only 250 miles to the island, sir," he said, "the gasolene tender could do it in little more than twelve hours and be back at the ship by to-morrow."

The captain smiled at his enthusiasm.

"But who could take the wireless while you are gone? I appreciate your anxiety to be reunited to your chum," for Captain Simms knew the story, "but it's duty first, you know, Ready, all along the line. We are here to warn liners of icebergs. I really think that we'll have to let others do the actual rescuing. It isn't as if the castaways were in actual want. They say they have plenty of provisions and fresh water so that a brief stay on the island till relief can be sent from the mainland won't be much of a hardship."

Jack's face fell. He had set his heart on go-

ing. But it appeared from Captain Simms' attitude that that would be impossible under the circumstances.

But he did not mean to give up without a struggle to gain his point.

"Young Higgins has developed into a very competent operator, sir," he ventured. "I know that the wireless would be safe in his hands till I got back."

"You can guarantee that, Ready?" asked Captain Simms, giving the boy one of his quick glances.

"Yes, sir. I'll answer for him."

The captain tugged his gray mustaches, a way he had when considering a question. Jack watched him eagerly.

"Well, then, I suppose I'll have to give you my permission to go, Ready," he said at length. "You can take your portable wireless with you and keep in constant communication with the *Thespis*. I will detail Sherry and Merryweather

to go with you. The prospects are all for fine weather and I shall expect you back to-morrow."

"Aye, aye, sir," choked out Jack, saluting respectfully and restraining himself with difficulty from uttering a shout of joy. And so it came about that we find the gasolene tender of the *Thespis* racing northward.

"Take the wheel, Merryweather, while I send a message," said Jack presently, and as the seaman gripped the spokes of the wheel, the lad hoisted his aërials aloft on the tender's single military mast. They were not long enough for sending messages a great distance. But for communication with the *Thespis* they answered admirably. Jack reported "Progress and all O.K."

They took turns at eating supper and all devoured their food with ravenous appetites. By his portable wireless, Jack had instructed young Higgins to tell the castaways to hang out a lantern that night so that if they approached the island in the darkness they could lie off till day-

break and not tempt fate by venturing among unknown waters, for the charts did not bother to give soundings round such a seldom visited speck of land as Skull Island.

As it grew dusk and night began to close in, old Matt Sherry came forward and spoke to Jack.

"I don't like the look of the weather," he said.

"What do you mean? Are we in for a storm? This craft is staunch enough to ride out anything that is likely to hit us."

"It's not that."

"Well, what then?"

"Fog. Do you see that smoky looking line yonder to the north?"

"Yes, it does look like smoke on the top of the water."

"That's fog. It's the warm air hitting the cold water. It'll be all around us in a few hours."

"Humph! That is bad. Would you suggest lying to?"

"No; for there ain't likely to be any other craft but ourselves in this part of the ocean and we've got a clear run on the compass course to Skull Island. But we'd better keep taking the temperature of the water; there may be ice about and we don't want to hit a berg."

"I should say not. Better put Merryweather to work with a bucket and a thermometer and tell him to make half-hourly reports. If the temperature drops, he is to report at once."

"Very well; that's a wise plan," agreed Sherry and went aft to give the seaman his instructions.

As Matt Sherry had prophesied, within a few hours they were driving forward through a blinding white fog. But Jack easily kept the boat on her course by the compass bearings worked out before they left the *Thespis*. Merryweather reported regularly and so far no alarming drop in the temperature of the water, showing the near presence of ice, had occurred.

"We'll pull through after all," said Jack to Sherry, who had come forward to see the result of Merryweather's latest reading.

"Hark! What was that?" cried Merryweather suddenly. He leaned forward listening.

"Sounded like the creak of a ship's block to me," exclaimed Matt Sherry, "sound your siren quick, Jack."

Jack pulled a lever and the compressed air siren let out a long dismal screech. At the same instant, from the out of the white smother, came a shout. They could not determine its direction in the obscurity.

"In the name of heaven, a boat!"

"Where away?" came another voice gruffly out of the fog.

"I dunno. Right under our bow it sounded like——"

There was a sudden sharp shout from Sherry.

"Save yourselves. They're right on us!"

Above the doomed launch, from out of the mist, a towering black mass obtruded.

There was a splintering crash, a confusion of shouts and cries and then Jack felt the tender sinking under his feet while the water rushed up to his knees.

More by instinct than reason he gave an upward leap into the fog.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

UNCLE TOBY IS SURPRISED.

"Matt, is that you?"

Jack turned to a crouching form beside him.

"Yes, and Merryweather's here, too. Thank God we are all saved."

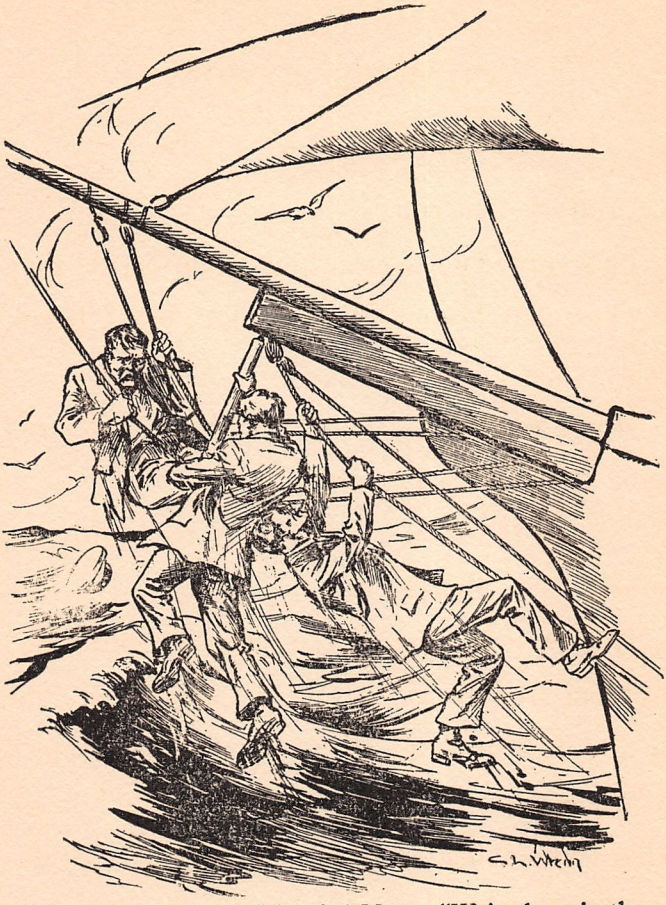
"I got an awful wallop on the head," declared Jack. "I feel dazed, where are we?"

"In the bowsprit rigging of some ship," rejoined Matt Sherry.

"We must have been born under a lucky star," declared Merryweather. "I just jumped straight up and then suddenly found I'd grabbed a rope."

"Same here," declared Jack, "I didn't know what I was doing. I guess I was so scared of going down with the tender that I jumped for the first thing I saw."

"That's the instinct of self-preservation," said



"We saved ourselves," bawled Matt. "We're here in the bowsprit rigging."—*Page* 229.

Matt. "I've read that it works blindly. But we'd better give 'em a hail up above. Hark! They are laying the vessel to and lowering a boat. I reckon they are going to look for us."

"They must think that we are all in the water," said Jack as there came a flapping of sails from out of the mist and then the creak of davit blocks and the splash of oars. The rush of water under the ship's forefoot ceased and she came to a standstill.

"Ahoy, on deck there!" hailed Matt with stentorian lungs.

"Ahoy!" came from above, "where are you? We'll save you. Keep up your courage."

"We saved ourselves," bawled Matt, "we're here in the bowsprit rigging. Heave us a rope, and we'll come on deck."

"Are you all there?" came the voice incredulously.

"Well, I can't see anything missing about me,"

declared Matt, "yes we were all saved. You can call back the boat."

A rope ladder was lowered to them and one by one they clambered on deck. Jack, as commander of the sunken tender, came last. He found an excited group clustered round his two shipmates asking a perfect tornado of questions. Lanterns gave light and revealed the faces of the group.

Foremost among the questioners was a little old man, with a gnarled face, like those you sometimes see carved on pipes. His skin was burned a rich mahogany color and his eyes twinkled restlessly. He was dressed as if he were the captain of the ship, in a pilot coat with brass buttons and a seaman's cap with crossed anchors. Beneath his coat could be seen the end of a wooden leg with which he stamped impatiently on the deck as he volleyed his questions. Just as Jack appeared he had drawn from his coat a big medicine bottle which he offered to Sherry.

"Take a pull of this, mate," he crief in gruff, sailor-like tones, "t'wont hurt yer."

"What is it?" demanded Sherry, "I'm no drinking man."

"It's not liquor," the other assured him volubly, "it's Cap'n Toby Ready's Universal Remedy and Banisher of Pain in Man and Beast. It's made frum the best of yarbs and roots under my personal supervision and—great tom cats!"

"Hullo, Uncle Toby," said Jack, coming forward and causing this abrupt breaking off of Uncle Toby's eulogy on his favorite concoction.

"Jack! Sufferin' humanity! It's Jack!" cried the old man. "How under the almighty sun did you get here. Did I run you down? How did it happen? What were you doing?"

"One question at a time, Uncle Toby," laughed Jack. "Can't we all go aft to your cabin and I'll tell you everything leading up to this queer meeting."

"Queer you may well call it," vociferated Un-

cle Toby, "broomsticks and bangaloons, if I ever heard the like, and me sailin' the Seven Seas. But heave to there, Toby, you ain't doing the polite. Jack, I want you ter meet my partner, Mr. Rufus Terrill, of Terrill & Co."

"How d'ye do, my dear young man, how d'ye do."

From the lantern-lit group a tall, cadaverous figure detached itself. Mr. Rufus Terrill was as angular as an old fashioned candlestick, and about as slender. His skin was yellow and his teeth long and sharp, projecting like tusks from under a scraggly mustache. His eyes were cold and watery, yet had a penetrating quality. He looked sharply at Jack. Perhaps he read a look of disapproval in the boy's eyes, for he soon relaxed his clammy clasp on the lad's hand.

"Mr. Terrill is my partner, my business partner, Jack," said Uncle Toby.

"So I've heard," said Jack shortly.

"You have. How'd you find out that?" asked

Mr. Terrill quickly, darting his head in and out of a collar several sizes too large for his scrawny neck, like a box-turtle looking out of his shell.

"I visited your offices in New York," rejoined Jack, "and now let's go aft, Uncle Toby.

Sail was made again and the party, including Merryweather and Sherry, made their way toward the stern. Jack was not a little troubled. By an extraordinary coincidence he was reunited to his uncle. But he had yet to learn the details of the mad cruise, of which the note nailed up on the door of the *Venus* had first apprised him. Of one thing, however, he was very sure. His first five minutes' observation of Mr. Terrill had convinced him that that gentleman would bear watching.

After he had told his story, Jack maneuvered things so that Mr. Terrill was told off to show Merryweather and Sherry their sleeping places.

"Now, then, uncle," said Jack, "what is all this?"

Uncle Toby's lined and seamed old face assumed a look of extraordinary cunning.

"We're on our way to get rich, lad," he chuckled, "rich as that Greaser chap history tells about."

"Crœsus?" ventured Jack.

"Aye, that's the bully. We're shaping a course fer Cedar Island and the stone chest Cap'n Walters hid from the white Esquimaux, you've heard of 'em."

"You mean the tribe Steffason discovered?"

"That's them. They're all blondes, though rightly speaking they ought to be black. Well, to cut a long yarn short, Walters got lost in a whaling ship up here and hooked up with a tribe of 'em. He married one of their gals and she told him about the stone chest on Cedar Island. He didn't dare try to get it alone but one night he sneaks out in a native canoe, an' by good luck is picked up by a sealer bound fer the states. But when he got thar he was too sick fer even the

Universal Remedy ter be of any good. Afore he died he give me the bearings and so on of Cedar Island, all ship-shape, an' I hunts up Terrill & Co. an' they agrees to go inter it with me and—and here we are.

"With my pockets full o' gold. As I sailed," croaked the old man in a harsh voice.

"Here's the map all drawed kerrect an' ter scale," added Uncle Toby, drawing a yellow, dirty bit of paper from his pocket and shoving it toward Jack. It was at this moment that Terrill reëntered the cabin.

"Ah! giving our young friend an idea of what we are after, eh?" he said, rubbing his thin hands till his knuckles cracked like firecrackers, "good, very good. But our young friend must be secretive about it. No loose talk, you know. This is a close corporation."

"Which you would like limited to Terrill & Co.," thought Jack, aloud he contented himself by saying shortly:

"I understand all that. Captain Ready is my uncle, you know."

"Quite so," agreed Mr. Terrill, displaying all his teeth in a grin, "but he's my partner, my dear young man."

CHAPTER XXIX.

OFF FOR SKULL ISLAND.

So far as Jack could judge, his uncle had fallen under the influence of the man, Terrill, to a considerable extent. This was shown when the boy broached the subject of making a stop at Skull Island to pick up the castaways.

"I don't see how we can do that," declared Terrill, "we lost several weeks' time since the start repairing our schooner, the *Morning Star;* she sprung a leak and we had to put into Portland, Maine, for repairs."

"Oh! I wondered why you were so long in getting this far north," said Jack, "but, uncle, if you'll give me the chart I'll show you your direct course for Skull Island."

"Those persons can get off without our aid," demurred Terrill. "They have plenty of food

and water and the *Thespis* knows of their plight. Depend upon it, they will be rescued without our making any more delays. My business suffers all the time I am away."

Jack ignored him and turned to his uncle.

"Uncle Toby, you are sailing master of the *Morning Star?*"

"Yes—er—that is Mr. Terrill—yes, decidedly so, my lad. What's in the wind?"

"I want you to shape a course for Skull Island. It won't delay you more than a few hours. It's your bounden duty as a seaman to go to the aid of distressed mariners."

"Um—er—that's so, Mr. Terrill, you know," stuttered Uncle Toby with a look at the other, who was drumming his long, bony fingers on the table in a devil's tattoo.

"I know nothing about all that. I'm a business man. Time is money," snapped Mr. Terrill.

"I'd like to do it," said Uncle Toby, "yes, sir, I'd like to do that—everything but——"

"See here, Uncle Toby," cut in Jack, "haven't you often told me of your shipwrecks and how gallantly you have been rescued. Didn't you say that no man worthy to tread the quarter deck of a ship would ever ignore a call for help?"

"Humph!—yes, that's so. And I think so, too," rejoined Uncle Toby, with a flash of his old spirit, "get the chart, Jack."

Jack, seeing that he had touched the right chord and gained a momentary ascendency over Terrill, hastened to get the great paper roll from the rack where it was kept.

"Here's Skull Island," he said. "If you follow a direct course you can be there by day-light."

"By chowder, that's true enough, lad," cried Uncle Toby. He brought his withered fist down on the table with a bang. "I'll do it, Terrill. It won't delay us much and, consarn it all, man, it's nothing more than common humanity."

"That may be, but it's not common sense," grumbled Terrill, and retired to his cabin, leaving Jack with a victory on his hands. Before they turned in Jack and Uncle Toby went on deck and the latter gave orders for the course to be shaped for Skull Island.

"Call me as soon as its sighted," he said, "you should pick it up about daybreak."

"If only I had saved my wireless," thought Jack, as he turned in that night. "As things are now I can't let Captain Simms know of what has happened and he'll think something has gone wrong, either through carelessness or some other cause. Oh, well, after all Raynor, by some wonderful means, has got a radio set, and I can use that. I wish it was morning, I can hardly wait till we sight Skull Island. Good old Raynor, something told me right along that he would turn up safe and sound, and he has."

"I'm going up to the flagstaff to keep a lookout," said Raynor as he shook himself out of his

blankets the next morning. "Jack ought to be heaving in sight any time now."

"Dat's so," agreed Noddy, "an' dat old canary cage of a wireless did de trick after all. Well, I take it all back. Frum now on I b'live all I hear."

The two lads dressed quickly and made their way to the flagstaff. In the meantime Pompey set to work to build a fire. He hacked vigorously at the tough wood which he had gathered from the wind-twisted brush patches that dotted the island.

"Mah goodness alive," he muttered to himself as he worked, "dis wood am as tuff as a thirty-year-ole rooster. Dere! Take dat yo' ole stick. Gollyumption, ef I hit as hard as dat agin I'm li'bul ter chop a hole in de flo' ob dis ole hut. But ah don' care ef I do. We alls is gwine away froum hyah ter-day. Dat hair-oil machine done do de job."

The negro poised his axe to give a stick laid

across two others a mighty blow which should break it in half.

Smash! The axe fell with all the strength of the negro's arms behind it. The next instant there was a crash and simultaneously a yell broke from Pompey. One fragment of the wood had flown up and hit him in the eye.

The other had hurtled across the room and crashed against the delicate coherer of the wireless set, rendering it useless. Pompey forgot about his swelling eye as he saw this.

"Mah goodness, dat stick done bust dat hair-oil machine!" he gasped. "Gollyumption, what'll ah do? Gracious hyah comes de boys now too. Dey am running. Dey mus' hab news. What am it?" he exclaimed as Raynor and Noddy burst into the hut.

"It's a schooner. A schooner making straight for the island!" panted Raynor.

"But I thought yo' frens was coming in a lilly gasolene boat?" said Pompey.

"So did I. I can't make it out. The schooner is coming for the island sure enough, though. She'll be dropping anchor in half an hour. But where on earth can Jack be? Guess I'll see if I can pick anything up by wireless."

"Uh-uh-uh, Massa Raynor," sputtered Pompey, clutching his sleeve nervously, "ah-ah-ah——"

"What's the matter? Are you choking?"

"Nun-nun-no, sah. But de fac' is dat a bit ob wood jump up frum whar ah wuz chopping it an'——"

"Great Scott, the detector's broken and the wireless is out of commission. Confound you, Pompey, I've a great mind to——"

"B-o-o-m!"

The sound of a heavy report came from seaward.

"Gee! a choint cracker!" exclaimed Noddy.

"No, that was a gun. The schooner is firing

to attract our attention," cried Raynor, "come on, Noddy."

Both boys raced from the hut, their eyes aglow with excitement. Pompey stood still just as they had left him. He didn't look comfortable. He began casting anxious glances about the hut as if looking for some place to hide.

"Gollyumption, ah don' see no place ob concealment in de occurrents dat dey is pirates or somethin' like dat," he muttered in an alarmed tone, "ah wish ah'd nebber shipped on dat *Polly Ann,* das what ah do."

The crashing sound of another gun made the negro jump almost out of his skin.

"Mah goodness, ah'll turn white if dey keeps up dat," he sputtered, "dat ain't de way no fren'ly party greets yo'. No, sah, dat firin' ob guns means, 'Look out, dere. We alls got it in fo' yo-alls.' Guess ah'll hide under de blankets. Dere ain't no udder place ter go."

CHAPTER XXX.

JACK AND BILL MEET ONCE MORE.

From the eminence where the flagpole had been erected, the two young castaways of the island watched the schooner brought smartly to an anchorage. Then a second gun boomed.

"Does dat mean dey are goin' ter fight us?" asked Noddy apprehensively.

"No," returned Raynor, "look, can't you see they are waving to us. I guess the gun was meant as a salute. And look, a boat is being lowered. I wish I had a pair of glasses."

Soon the boat came rapidly toward them. It was rowed by four sailors and in the stern sheets sat three figures. In a few seconds a joyous shout burst from Raynor's lips as he recognized one of them.

"It's Jack—Jack Ready! Hurray!"

He began waving frantically while Jack stood up and signaled as frantically back.

"See, they are going to land in that cove by the hut, let's hurry down there," said Raynor. The two boys reached the beach just as the *Morning Star's* boat grated on the sand.

"Jack!" cried Raynor, in a voice that shook a little as the young wireless lad leaped ashore.

"Well, old fellow, if it isn't good to see you again. What a time we shall have talking over our adventures!" cried Jack, as the two wrung each other's hands as if they never would stop.

But Uncle Toby interposed.

"Avast that! Bill Raynor," he cried, "give me a shake of your flipper, shipmate. It's glad I am to see you all sound and afloat and A. Number One at Lloyds."

"Why, Uncle Toby!" exclaimed Raynor, who had met the old mariner many times on board the *Venus,* where he spent much time with Jack when ashore, "how are you? How did you get

here? And Jack, what is he doing on board that schooner? I thought——"

"It's a long story, boy, and we can talk better over some grub, I'm thinking. Shall we go back to the ship?"

"No; come up to the hut. I want to show you all how ship-wrecked mariners live. Pompey will cook us up a fine breakfast. In the meantime, let me introduce Mr. Noddy Nipper, late of the *Polly Ann.*"

"And recent of Skull Island," added Noddy.

"An' this, gentleman all, is Mr. Terrill, my partner," said Uncle Toby, waving toward that individual who, in the sunlight, looked yellower than ever.

"Much obliged ter meet cher," said Noddy, adding in an aside to Raynor. "He looks like one of dem wharf rats I used ter see aroun' de sugar docks on de East River."

With everybody talking at once, except Mr. Terrill, who lagged behind, seemingly busy with

his thoughts, the group made for the hut. Mr. Terrill, with his eyes on the ground, was muttering to himself as he slowly paced after them.

"That makes three more added to the forces of Captain Ready when the time comes," he breathed. "Three last night and three this morning—six. It makes the situation more difficult when the hour comes to strike. I don't like that youngster Jack Ready. He's too smart by half. I believe I'll have trouble with him before this thing is over."

"Well, where's your cook?" inquired Uncle Toby, when they reached the hut, for no Pompey was visible.

"I can't think, unless he has gone to the spring," rejoined Raynor, looking about him.

"Avast, thar," cried Uncle Toby suddenly, "thar's something moving under that blanket. Look out, boys, it may be a snake."

He picked up a big stick of wood and smote the blankets lustily with it. The result was start-

ling. An appalling yell came from the bedding.

"Ow-ouch, Misto Pirate, don' done hit me. Ah come out. Oh, Lawsy, mah bones am broken——"

"Come out of that, Pompey," exclaimed Raynor angrily. "What are you hiding for? What's all that gibberish about pirates?"

"Dey done fire guns. Ah think dey come to comblisterate de island," moaned Pompey, getting out of his hiding place and rubbing himself where the stick had hit him, with a doleful expression, "mah goodness, ah think dat stick mustah bruk some ob mah bones."

"Nonsense, if it had hit your head it would have broken the stick. Get up and get breakfast," said Raynor, who knew something of Pompey's ways of gaining sympathy.

"And here's something to take the smart out," said Uncle Toby, giving the negro a coin.

"Thank-you, gen'ellman," said Pompey, with a broad grin, and all his troubles forgotten. "I

perceed at oncet wid' de prognostications fo' de mat'stushanal meal."

"Matutinal meal I suppose he means," laughed Raynor to the rest. "Pompey has a language that's all his own."

"He should be suppressed," declared Mr. Terrill, "the idea of calling us pirates and then, as for giving him money—disgraceful."

"Cheer up, Terrill," chuckled Uncle Toby, "you and me 'ull have so much money before long that we kin give the Rockybilts a stake ef they should happen ter need it."

In the general laugh that followed Jack noticed that Terrill's expression was anything but amiable. In fact, he looked as if he wished the whole party anywhere but there. During breakfast everybody told their stories and Raynor apprised Jack of the injury to the wireless.

The young operator examined it with a rueful look.

"Out of business. Too bad," he murmured. "I

counted on it for notifying Captain Simms of what had happened. It may be weeks before I can rejoin the *Thespis.*"

"Why, won't your uncle sail us all back to her?" asked Raynor, who had regarded this part of the program as cut and dried.

Jack looked serious. He looked hastily round to be sure no one overheard and then said in a low voice.

"My uncle is on a crack brained search for treasure which may or may not exist. This man Terrill has furnished the capital and so, in a way, dominates the expedition. He has a sinister influence over my uncle and won't hear of losing any more time in locating the treasure, so we are all bound on a long trip."

"Well, are we all ready," struck in Mr. Terrill's rasping voice. He looked impatiently at his watch.

"As ready as we'll ever be, boss," cried the

Bowery boy, making an expressive face at Mr. Terrill behind his back.

"Then let's get back to the *Morning Star,* boys," cried Uncle Toby. "I had treasures manifold, as I sailed," he sang in his gruff old sea voice.

As they were leaving the hut a sudden notion seized Jack. He turned to Raynor.

"We'll take that wireless set along," he said. "I've a notion I might be able to repair it."

"I don't see what good it will be," objected Raynor, "anyhow, we can't wait to get down the aërials."

"Never mind them. There's copper wire on the *Morning Star,* it's used to repair parts of the rigging."

"All right," said Raynor, dismantling the parts of the set and calling to Noddy and Pompey to help in carrying them to the boat, "but as I said before, I think it's a waste of labor. What do you want it for?"

"I don't just know myself," admitted Jack, "but things are not going as smoothly on the *Morning Star* as Uncle Toby thinks, and if ever we needed to signal for help, this wireless would be a mighty handy thing to have."

"Here comes a fresh breeze," shouted Mr. Terrill from the distance, "hurry, boys, we must take advantage of it."

CHAPTER XXXI.

IN A BOILING SEA.

Two days later found the *Morning Star,* after much struggling against baffling winds, bowling along under a favoring breeze. Uncle Toby rubbed his hands as he looked aloft at the canvas, every foot of which was smartly drawing and urging the schooner forward.

Even Mr. Terrill's face had lost its customary sour look. He stood conversing amidships with the mate, whose name was Jarrow. Jarrow was squat and broad and had a squint in his blood-shot eyes that gave him an expression that was not prepossessing.

"I wonder what those two are talking about," remarked Jack to Raynor, as the two lads stood on the stern deck. "Somehow I've got it into my head that they and part of the crew are in a plot."

"What makes you think so?" asked Raynor, giving a glance round to see that Noddy, who was splicing a rope, was not listening. Up forward Pompey could be seen aiding the *Morning Star's* cook.

"Just this, and nothing more than the fact that they are always consulting together, and I've noticed that Jarrow talks to the crew more than a mate should. I've told Noddy and Pompey to be on the lookout and see if they can find out what's going on. I'm certain some dirty work is brewing."

Just then Jarrow looked round and caught Jack's eye fixed on him. He nudged Mr. Terrill, and the two moved apart. Mr. Terrill favored Jack with a malevolent scowl as he passed him.

"He certainly does love me," laughed the boy, careless if Terrill overheard him or not.

"We ought to be off Cedar Island to-morrow, lads," said Uncle Toby, strolling up, "on Tom Tiddler's ground picking up gold and silver."

"Haven't you ever thought there might be a possibility of the stone chest being gone?" asked Jack, "that is, if it was ever there?"

His uncle looked at him as if he had uttered some terrible heresy.

"Why, of course it's there," he declared, stamping his wooden leg; "where else would it be? Didn't Cap'n Walters say——"

"Deck ahoy!" came from the lookout forward.

"Ahoy," roared Uncle Toby, "what's up?"

"There is a mist right ahead and what looks like the top of a mountain," came back the reply.

"Can it be Cedar Island?" wondered Jack.

"No, it's not Cedar Island," declared his uncle, "we couldn't have made a landfall of that yet. Wait a brace of shakes and I'll see what it is."

With extraordinary agility he clambered into the weather main shrouds, bracing himself by thrusting his wooden leg through the ratlines.

Then he clapped his glasses to his eyes. A puzzled look came over his weather-beaten countenance.

"Blessed if I know what it is," he growled. "Looks more like a fire than anything else."

Just then the bell sounded for dinner, a summons to which the boys were never deaf. When they came on deck again after the meal, an extraordinary scene met their gaze. The schooner was going fast through moderately smooth water, but a quarter of a mile ahead the sea was covered with a milky white mist under which the waves boiled and tumbled in wild confusion. As they looked from the body of the mist, there was belched a dense cloud of black smoke.

"Port! Hard aport!" bawled Cap'n Toby, and he himself sprang to the wheel and aided the helmsman in carrying out the maneuver, "flatten in those head sails! Look smart, now!"

The *Morning Star* shot off on a new tack just in time to avoid sailing right into the midst of

the bubbling, boiling water, for the breeze had dropped and her progress was slower.

"What on earth is it?" demanded Raynor of Captain Toby.

"It's a subterranean eruption!" shouted the captain. "I've heard of such in these parts. Sir John Franklin saw 'em. Look! Look yonder!"

A cable's length off, a great black patch of what glistened like mud, rose out of the sea. It bubbled and blistered like baking dough. Thick columns of smoke rose all round it, and jets of steam shot from holes in its surface.

The breeze suddenly veered. A fierce gust, laden with steam and smoke, swept down on the *Morning Star.*

The sailors shouted with alarm. Mr. Terrill turned the color of parchment.

"Is-there-is——er-that is, are we in danger?" he stammered.

"Dunno yet," snapped Uncle Toby, "consarn

that thar wind, it's coming frum every which way at once. Reg'lar Irishman's hurricane."

A fearful stench, sulphurous and choking, enveloped them with the cloud of noxious vapors. They coughed and choked as if they were being suffocated.

"Oh-oh, this is terrible," wheezed Mr. Terrill, "oh, dear! oh, dear, are we all going to die? Ugh! ugh! I wish I'd never come on this trip."

"Don't talk so much and waste your breath, and you'll feel better," advised Jack.

Even in his misery and fright, Terrill shot the boy a malevolent look, but he said nothing.

A rushing, roaring sound was heard, as the *Morning Star* suddenly rushed forward once more as the breeze chopped round, mercifully blowing the suffocating fumes the other way. But the spray that flew over her bows was boiling hot. The men forward were forced to retreat aft.

For one terrible instant it looked as if the little

craft must be driven into the midst of the inferno of smoke and steam and stench before she could be put on another tack, but in the next moment a cheer broke from all hands as she shot forward, and left the strange disturbance behind her.

"Phew! I couldn't have stood much more of that," said Jack. "Are such things common in the northern seas, Uncle Toby?"

"No, lad, they're not. But once in a while a whaling master will report encountering one. They're some of the queer things that them as goes down to the sea in ships, as the good book says, gets a chance to see. There, look!"

He pointed behind them. The boys followed the direction of his gaze. They saw the boiling mass of mud subside as suddenly as it had come, making great swells that came chasing after the *Morning Star,* making her plunge and dance on their crests.

The next morning the boys were up betimes.

The crew were all on the alert too, for a bonus of ten dollars had been offered to the first man who should sight Cedar Island. Suddenly, from forward, from a man perched high in the cross-trees, came a shout.

"Land ho!"

"Where away?" bawled Uncle Toby.

"To the northwest, sir. It's an island. There's something sticking up on it, sir."

Captain Toby swarmed into the rigging, using his wooden leg as if it were a good one. He held his glasses to his eyes for a spell, and then turned with an excited look on his storm-beaten face.

"Cedar Island!" he shouted, and all along the decks the cry was taken up.

The boys gave a loud cheer. The excitement of the treasure hunt, although Jack believed it was a wild goose chase, had entered into their blood. Just at this moment, while his eyes were riveted on the tiny, almost invisible blob of land to the northwest, something made Jack turn. He

saw Mr. Terrill saying something in a quick, low tone to Jarrow, the mate. The boy's quick ears caught a part of what was said, and it confirmed his worst suspicions.

"Don't forget our plan, Jarrow. How does the crew stand?"

"Oh, I've fixed them O.K.," was the rejoinder, and then the voices sunk so low that the lad could hear no more.

CHAPTER XXXII.

CEDAR ISLAND AT LAST.

But in the excitement of the approach to Cedar Island, which was every moment taking on clearer and clearer outlines as the schooner neared it, Jack forgot everything else. A smart "topsail" breeze was blowing, and under it the schooner swiftly bore down on the island.

The boys saw rough, jagged cliffs shooting up from a sea of the deepest azure blue. The cliffs bunched as they rose, and the island appeared to rise in a sort of cone in the center. It looked gloomy and inhospitable. Even at a distance they could see the white spray as the waves broke against the steep cliffs.

"Look," cried Jack suddenly, "there's what gives the island its name, I guess."

At the summit of the highest point of the island

could now be seen a lone tree. It looked as if it were dead and stretched out its naked branches against the sky.

Cap'n Toby was fairly dancing with excitement.

"It's the place, the place," he kept shouting, "there's the lone tree, there are the cliffs, everything is just as Cap'n Walters said it was."

"It's a mournful-looking place," commented Jack.

"What difference, lad," was Uncle Toby's retort, "all we've got to do is to land, get the stone chest and then yo, ho! for home and riches."

"I hope your schemes won't turn out to be false hopes," said Jack.

"Confound it, lad, you seem to think the stone chest isn't there."

"I am pretty skeptical. Any one of a thousand things might have happened to it since Captain Walters left."

In an hour's time the schooner had been

brought as close in to the island as they dared, for those unknown waters might be filled with saw-toothed reefs and rocky shoals. Snow lay in the abysses between the steeply sloping rocky hills that made up the interior of the island. Scanty shrubs with dark foliage found a precarious growth in patches. Sea birds rose in clouds as the schooner's anchor roared down, and flew screaming in anger or astonishment about the invader of their solitude.

"Come on, boys," cried Uncle Toby, "who's for the honor of being the first ashore."

Of course there was a scramble. Raynor sought and obtained permission for Noddy Nipper to be one of the party. It would have broken the Bowery boy's heart to have been left behind. Mr. Terrill, however, to their astonishment, did not appear inclined to go ashore. He said he had a bad headache and would lie down.

"Very well, we'll do the prospecting for you, eh, boys?" said Uncle Toby heartily; but Jack

flashed a suspicious look at Terrill as he turned and went below. Then some instinct prompted him to whisper to Raynor. The boys also sought the cabin. When they came back, their arms were full of bundles.

"What are those for," inquired Cap'n Toby.

"Oh, just by way of setting up housekeeping ashore," returned Jack with a laugh.

"I can't spare any of my men right now to row you ashore," said Jarrow, the squint-eyed mate, "but you can take along Merryweather and Sherry."

The two revenue cutter men, who had been doing odd jobs with the crew since their rescue, were only too glad to go along. Soon the boat was lowered and everything ready for the landing.

"There's something suspicious about all this to me," whispered Jack to Raynor as they cast off.

"What's the trouble?"

"Why, haven't you noticed that there are none

of the regular crew with us, and that Terrill made an excuse not to go ashore. There's something queer at the bottom of it."

But no more was said just then, for Cap'n Toby, in high good humor, was pointing out the course they must lay to the oarsmen. His aged but keen eyes had spied a little cove that would make a good landing place. The boat was headed for this.

Before long they were ashore. The cove ran up inland between frowning walls of black cliff. But there appeared to be an exit to the interior of the island at the other end of it.

Pulling the boat up on the beach, the adventurers set off over the sand and were soon clambering among precipitous rocks, Jack and Raynor helping Uncle Toby over the worst places. The old captain's map gave the hiding place of the stone chest as a cairn under the dead branches of the cedar.

Soon they were in full view of the tree and

the heights on which it stood when they emerged from the abyss, and found themselves on a rocky plateau. From this plateau there rose what may be compared to a mesa on the western plains. It was a miniature table mountain with a flat top. On the summit was the cedar tree and, if Uncle Toby's hopes were not doomed to be dashed, the stone cairn and the treasure chest.

"That cedar tree never grew there," declared Jack, looking up the sheer cliffs at the mournful bare branches of the lone tree.

"No, Cap'n Walters always reckoned it was set up there by the people who had the treasure. They said it was a guide, he figgered," said Uncle Toby.

"What is supposed to be the origin of the treasure?" asked Raynor.

"Cap'n Walters allowed that hundreds of years ago the old Vikings from Norseland came over here and found some sort of gold diggings. At any rate, the treasure consists, in a large measure,

of beaten gold bracelets and breastplates and so forth. You know scientists say that there wasn't always as much ice up here as there is to-day. They say the world's axis has shifted a bit."

"I've heard that," said Jack, "but these blonde esquimaux, did the captain figure that they descended from the old Norsemen?"

"He didn't know nothing about that," was Cap'n Toby's reply, "but it sounds reasonable when you come ter think of it."

"What's puzzling me is how we are to get to the top of that plateau," said Jack, after a few minutes.

Uncle Toby drew out his map. He studied it for a minute. Then his face cleared.

"That stuck me, too, for a minute," he said. "Nothing but a fly could scale those cliffs. But see here, the map shows that on the other side there is a sort of natural rock bridge connecting Cedar Mountain, as we might call it, with the rest of the island."

"That's so," said Jack, "well, let's go round and take a look."

It was a tortuous path they had to follow, avoiding big boulders and huge rocks that were strewn about as though titans had been playing marbles with them. But at last they worked round to the other side of Cedar Mountain, as Uncle Toby had christened it.

Then a simultaneous cry of dismay broke from the lips of the entire party.

The rock bridge was gone!

The jagged edges where it had once spanned a deep gulch could be seen, but either the disintegration of the rock or some convulsion of nature had destroyed it. Cedar Mountain, with its steeply sloping, unsurmountable sides, was cut off from the rest of the island. It was, in fact, an unattainable island within an island.

"Stumped!" grunted Uncle Toby.

In his bitter disappointment he could find no

more to say. The rest of the party exchanged blank looks.

"I guess the treasure is safe for all time from intruding hands," said Jack softly. "I'm sorry, Uncle Toby."

But the old man now began to bemoan his fate. He stumped his wooden leg. He swore, something Jack had never heard him do before. He shook his fists at the sky. For the time being he was a madman.

When he quieted down a little they began the wearisome trip back to the cove where they had left the boat. It seemed an endless trip, but at length they reached it.

"Now to get back to the schooner and break the news," said Jack. "Won't Terrill be mad—Jee-hosh—a—phat, where is the schooner?"

Where, indeed? The anchorage where she had lain when they last saw her was empty. No vessel was in sight. Suddenly Merryweather broke into a shout.

"There! Look there yonder off that bight of land!" he cried.

Their eyes followed the direction in which he pointed. Angry exclamations broke from them all.

"The traitors! The sneaks!" exclaimed Jack chokingly.

Off a rocky point the *Morning Star* was tacking clearly with the intention of rounding it.

"They are making for the other side of the island," continued Jack. "Terrill's plot to seize the treasure with the help of that rascal crew has come to a head. But he'll be nicely fooled. No human being can ever scale Cedar Mountain."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

TERROR CARSON AGAIN.

"Well, Jack, this is about the worst yet."

It was Raynor speaking. He and Jack were sitting on the sandy beach leaning against the boat. The others were scattered about with gloomy countenances. Cap'n Toby, utterly prostrated by this sudden dashing of his hopes, lay face downward on the beach in silence. He had not spoken a word since his outbreak and Jack feared for his reason.

"It's pretty bad. We've got no food and no prospect of getting any, not to mention water. That rat, Terrill! If I ever get my hands on him and that treacherous Jarrow. They fooled us nicely, getting everyone who was hostile to them off the schooner."

"Terrill certainly holds the whip hand over

us," agreed Raynor. "I suppose that he'll make us come to some sort of agreement before he'll let us have provisions or water."

"I don't see what the agreement can be," rejoined Jack gloomily. "We can't come to any concerning the treasure, for that's on the top of Cedar Mountain. It's about as unattainable as the moon. If only we had that wireless rigged, there's a bare chance that we might pick up help."

"What does it need to repair it?" inquired Raynor.

"That unlucky stick of Pompey's smashed the silicon of the detector, but I have noticed traces of what looks like pyron in these rocks, and if we could get some of that, I believe I could fix the apparatus up."

"But in the meantime we starve to death," objected Raynor.

Jack could not but agree. He looked gloomily out at the empty sea. Suddenly there came a joyous shout from round one of the rocky

points that shut in the cove. It was Noddy. The next moment the Bowery boy appeared. He was burdened down by the weight of three big cod fish.

"Hurray, fellers, here's our supper," he panted as he staggered up to them with his burden.

"Good for you, Noddy. Well, we shan't go hungry, at any rate," cried Jack, "but how did you get the tackle?"

"Found it in de boat. I went nosin' aroun' while youse guys was all chewing der rag. I found something else in de boat too. A keg of water and anudder of biscuits, dose big roun' fellers dey call sinkers."

"By hookey, now I come to think of it every boat on the schooner was stocked with biscuit and water," cried Jack. "I remember hearing Uncle Toby talk about it. It's a maritime law to keep boats provisioned, but I guess it's more honored in the breach than in the observance."

The spirits of all rose greatly at the prospect

of food. Even Captain Toby sat up and ate his share of broiled cod-fish and biscuit. But the old man gazed about him in a vacant way and kept mumbling to himself, and whimpering like a child over his misfortunes.

"I'm afraid his mind is affected," Jack breathed to Raynor. Indeed, it appeared so.

Supper was over and darkness had set in. But they managed to keep warmth and light about the camping place by kindling a big fire of brushwood. They were thinking of turning in and trying to sleep, although it was bitter cold outside the immediate vicinity of the fire, and they had no blankets, when there came a sound from seaward that startled them all.

"Ahoy! Who are you?"

"It's some of that rascally Jarrow crew up to some trick," declared Sherry, "don't answer them."

"It doesn't sound like them," said Jack hesitatingly.

"Seems to me I know that voice," said Raynor, "I've heard——"

"Ahoy, ashore there."

The hail came again. This time it was accompanied by the splash of oars.

"Boat ahoy! What do you want?" hailed Jack, cupping his hands.

"Can we make a safe landing there?"

"Yes, pull for the fire. But who are you?"

"Shipwrecked sailors," was the reply. Then there came the rapid dip of oars, and before many minutes a boat pulled into the glare of light cast by the fire. The boys ran forward as three men staggered out of the craft, showing signs of exhaustion. At sight of the first of the newcomers, Raynor uttered a shout of astonishment.

It was Terror Carson. The men with him were O'Brien, the Irish helmsman and another named Tewson.

"Captain Carson!" exclaimed Raynor. The other started back at the sound of his name. He

stared as if he had beheld an apparition from the grave.

"Great heavens! it's young Raynor!" he gasped out.

"Yes, Raynor, whom you left to die on the wreck of the *Polly Ann,*" said the boy sternly.

"An' here's anudder of yer chickens come home ter roost," exclaimed Noddy Nipper, stepping up, "you're a nice one, you are. You look as if you'd bin havin' a pretty tough time, an' you deserve it, too."

"Where are the rest of your crew? In other boats?" asked Raynor.

"Gone, all gone," moaned Carson weakly. "Lost in a storm which overwhelmed us. There were ten men in this boat, but they all died or went mad but myself and these two. We were just about giving up when we saw the light of this fire and made for it. It's—it's like a judgment upon me."

He sank down on the bench and covered his face with his hands.

"Have you anything that would bring a dead man to life like a bite of biscuit or sup of water at all, at all?" asked O'Brien.

"We are almost dead," said Tewson huskily.

The boys, scoundrel though they knew Carson to be, could not but furnish him with food and drink. The man's physique was so superb that, despite his sufferings in the boat, after his refreshment he was able to sit up, and talk of his adventures. O'Brien and Tewson, however, sank into a deep sleep of exhaustion.

"How did you come to this island?" asked Carson at length.

Jack explained and added:

"You see, your rescuers are almost as badly off as you are. The rascal Terrill——"

"Hold on," cried Carson, "that name again!"

"Terrill,—Rufus Terrill of Terrill & Co.," said Jack. "Do you know him?"

"Know him?" repeated Carson bitterly. "He was the cause of all my misfortunes. He made me what I am, an outlaw and a seal poacher. He is the biggest rascal unhung."

"Tell us about it," urged Jack.

Carson breathed hard as if laboring under some strong emotion.

"So Rufus Terrill is here, here on this island, is he?" he muttered. "Strange that fate should bring us face to face in this place. I was an honest man when I met Terrill. I had been a sea captain in the West India trade. I owned my own ship and had a happy home and a pretty young wife. Terrill wanted me to do some dishonest work for him by wrecking a ship that was heavily insured. I refused. Then came a time when misfortune overwhelmed me. I lost my ship in a tropical hurricane. I returned home to find my wife had died of a fever. I was desperate and Terrill found me an easy tool, for I was half out of my mind.

"Then came discovery of the insurance plot by the underwriters. Terrill got clever lawyers and they fixed the blame on me. In the meantime Terrill had given me money to keep out of the country. When I learned the trick he had played on me I didn't care what became of me. I invested what money I had in a seal poaching venture with a bad character known as Olaf Larsen. Larsen was killed by a chance shot when a British cruiser chased us. I was captured but escaped, and then fitted out the *Polly Ann.* I have sailed her ever since, till—till for my sins she was lost. Oh! if only I could begin over again, but it is too late, too late."

" 'It is never too late to mend,' " cited Jack, "perhaps, if ever we escape from this predicament, I can help you. I would be willing to."

"And I, too," said Raynor, stretching out his hand.

Tears filled Terror Carson's eyes. His voice shook as he said:

"I heard a preacher feller once talking about coals of fire. Now I know what he meant."

Soon after they all turned in. All, that is, but Carson. The last thing that Jack saw, as he dropped off into slumber, was the giant form of the seal poacher outlined blackly against the firelight. His head was sunk on his breast. His brawny arms folded. He stood motionless as a statue gazing into the embers as if he read his wild, rough past in the glowing coals.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A PERILOUS ADVENTURE.

Jack was astir betimes. The fire had died down and the chill awakened him. Carson lay asleep at last, curled up in the lee of his boat. Jack walked down to inspect the craft. It was a good-looking whale boat.

"If only we had enough provisions," he mused, "we might get away in her."

Apparently the boat had been used for whaling as well as sealing, for, neatly coiled in a tub, in the bow, was a coil of the finest and strongest manilla rope, the quality used for whaling, which is strong enough to stand almost any strain.

Jack looked idly at the rope for some time, his thoughts far away. But suddenly, for no reason that he could fathom, a sudden inspiration struck him.

"Hookey!" he exclaimed, "I know how I can get to the top of that plateau and fool Terrill and all that gang. If the food problem were settled I'd do it as soon as possible."

He looked seaward. To his surprise, within the few minutes that he had been staring at the whale boat, a new object had floated into view. It was a small boat bobbing up and down on the tiny waves, for the sea was very calm.

"Well, that's queer," thought Jack, "looks like one of the *Morning Star's* boats, too. And she's loaded with something. I guess I'll row out and take a look at her."

He roused Raynor and soon the two boys, in the boat they had landed in the day before, were rowing off to the strange craft. In a short time they were alongside. Nailed to the bow was a scrap of paper. On it was writing. But it was a hard hand to decipher. Finally, however, Jack made it out.

"It's from Pompey, that good old black soul,"

he cried. "He says he can't bear to think of us starving, so he stole some food while the crew was carousing, and two kegs of water, and put them in this boat, which lay alongside. He says that he overheard the mate saying that there was a strong current all around the island so that he hopes the boat will drift round our way."

"Good for him," cried Raynor. "He's got a real white heart, if his skin is black. See here, Jack, hams, potatoes, onions, all kinds of canned stuff. Why, he must have made a terrible raid on the provisions."

"I hope he doesn't get into trouble," said Jack soberly, as he made fast a rope to the other boat and the boys towed it ashore. A hearty breakfast was enjoyed by all. The more so because it was unexpected. After the meal was over, Jack had an announcement to make.

"Folks," he said, "one of our problems is solved. But we have still another on our hands. We cannot leave the island until we regain pos-

session of the schooner. Has anyone any suggestions to offer?"

None had just then except Uncle Toby, whose lips moved and head wagged, but only inarticulate sounds came forth.

"Then I declare this meeting adjourned," said Jack. "Come on," he added to Raynor, "we've got a lot of work on."

Jack chipped several specimens of what he believed to be pyron from the rocks. Pyron does not make as good a detector as silicon, still he believed it would serve to repair the apparatus. After some tinkering he said that he thought he had made the device efficient once more.

Luckily, the boat from the *Morning Star* had a saw, hammer and nails on board as part of the emergency kit. Jack got these out and then he and Raynor went into executive session with canvas, stripped from the locker covering, and long strips of wood pried from the gunwale of the boat. All morning they kept up a great saw-

ing and hammering, and by noon had produced an odd-looking contrivance. It was a parallelogram of thin strips of wood with a square box of canvas at each end.

After a hasty bite, Jack announced that he and Raynor were going off for a tramp. First, however, Jack borrowed Noddy's fishing line, which was about two hundred feet long. Leaving the camp much mystified as to their errand, they set off up the gulch, carrying with them the odd-looking object they had devoted the morning to constructing. To make no further mystery of it, the object was a box-kite. It is true it was a clumsy one, but a brisk breeze was blowing and Jack believed it would fly.

"And so you really think you are going to get to the top of Cedar Mountain?" asked Raynor dubiously, as they trudged along.

"I know I am," laughed Jack.

"You are pretty confident. Of course, I don't know half of your plan yet, though."

"Well, here's the machinery," said Jack, indicating the box-kite.

"It will never carry you up, even if the risk wasn't too great to attempt it," said Raynor, who believed that Jack meant to hang on to the kite and be borne to the top of Cedar Mountain that way.

Jack chuckled.

"There are more ways of killing a cat than choking it to death with cream," replied he.

At last they reached the foot of Cedar Mountain. Its walls rose steeply, almost menacingly, as if daring anyone to penetrate its secrets. Jack walked along till he found a point where the walls were lower than at other portions of the cliff face.

"Now then," said Jack, "let's find out how the wind blows."

He moistened his hand and held it up.

"Good! It's out of just the right direction."

He proceeded to tie the string—the erstwhile

fishing line—to the kite. Raynor watched him, and suddenly broke in.

"Say, you're putting a double string on. Scared one won't hold it?"

"That double string is the secret of the whole thing," smiled Jack. "Now just try some watchful waiting and you'll see—what you will see."

When the string was attached, Jack told Raynor to hold it up at a distance.

"Go," cried Jack, and ran back a bit. The clumsily made flyer began to mount in the air even better than he had hoped it would. The kite rose above the summit of the rocky wall, above the naked old cedar growing close to its edge. Jack began to maneuver the kite carefully. You are to remember that the double string hung down from it like an inverted V. At last, after much patient work, he managed to get the point of the V over the bare trunk of the cedar in such a way that an equal amount of string hung down on both sides.

Then, very carefully, Jack started to haul the kite down while Raynor held one of the ends taut so that it would not slip back. Jack soon had the kite on the ground, and there was a loop round the tree on the summit of the Cedar Mountain, and two ends on the ground.

"I see it now," cried Raynor enthusiastically, "but you can't haul yourself up on this string."

"I don't mean to. I know where there is plenty of stout rope. Now we'll go back to the cove and get the bunch, and before long we'll know if the stone chest is a myth or a reality. I didn't want to let them come along till I was sure my little device would work."

"Jack, you are a wonder!" exclaimed Raynor.

Half an hour later an expectant group stood at the foot of the cliff under the bare old cedar on the summit. Even Uncle Toby was there, gazing with his lack-luster eyes at the proceedings. Jack tied one end of the strong, pliant whale rope to one of the pendant ends of string. Then he be-

gan pulling on the unattached end. Steadily the rope mounted as he reeled in the string hand over hand. Before very long a loop of stout harpoon rope, instead of string, was round the cedar trunk.

"I knew Jack would do it!" exclaimed Raynor.

"He's de clear quill all right, all right!" ejaculated the Bowery boy with no less delight.

"Now then, boys," said Jack, making a big loop in one end of the rope and seating himself in it, "I'm going to get you to haul me up there."

"Great alligators, spos'in de tree pulls out," gasped Noddy, his face white under its freckles.

"I'm going to take a chance on that," said Jack. "Lay hold everybody. Now then—pull—easy now!"

Brawny arms laid hold of the rope and began to walk away with it.

Jack began to mount slowly into the air, using his knees to keep from being dashed against the cliff face as the rope oscillated.

It was a fearful trip. But the boy's eyes shone with triumph as he slowly ascended.

He had only one fear. Would the tree trunk hold fast? If it did not—Jack did not dare to look downward as this thought came into his mind.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE TREASURE.

That was a dizzy and nerve-racking elevator. At the end of the rising rope Jack swung about like a pendulum. At last the edge of the summit was almost reached.

"Steady on," called down Jack, "I'll climb the rest of the way," for he had noticed that it was not a hard scramble, from the point he had reached, to the top.

After a short struggle, he clambered and writhed himself to safety. Then he lay flat on his face for a moment on the flat top of the table mountain, regaining his breath and collecting his faculties.

After a while he rose. He looked over the brink and waved his cap to those below. The sound of a faint cheer was wafted up to him. Jack shouted back.

Then he turned his face upon the surface of the summit of Cedar Mountain. It was not perfectly flat as he had imagined from below. Rocky mounds covered it in every direction. Some struggling bushes and stunted trees also grew there.

From his point of vantage, Jack had an excellent view of the island and the sea for miles. At almost his first glance about him, he detected the schooner lying in a small bay on the opposite side of the island to the cove. On the beach he spied what appeared to be a camp. A boat was plying between the schooner and the shore.

"I wonder if they have found out yet that the treasure, if it's here at all, is ungettable," murmured Jack.

He used caution in going about the top of the mountain after that, crouching behind rocky mounds to avoid being seen from the schooner or Terrill's camp.

The "island in the air," as it might have been

fittingly called, was filled with deep crannies, in some of which snow still lay. To have fallen down one of them would have meant a miserable, lingering death, without possibility of rescue.

"Well, this is a unique adventure," thought Jack. "Even if there is no stone chest, it will have been well worth the experience."

He made for the great dead cedar by a circuitous route. His heart beat a little faster as, at its foot, he saw there had been erected a rough stone cairn.

"That makes part of the story true at any rate," he reflected, "but I see no sign of the chest."

The boy did not feel much disappointment. He had distrusted the story right along. So that he was not downcast to find that he had drawn a blank. There was no trace of a stone chest, or anything even remotely resembling it anywhere.

"Euchred!" murmured the boy, "poor Uncle Toby!"

There came a sudden shout from below. The

lad rushed to the edge of the cliff and looked over. What he saw gave him an unpleasant shock. Unperceived by him, three canoes had landed on the east end of the island.

Their occupants, wild looking Esquimaux, had stolen up unobserved on the party below. From his post of vantage, Jack saw Carson snatch out a pistol and fire point-blank into the onrush of natives, who brandished spears and clubs. Sherry and Merryweather, too, covered the retreat of the rest with their service revolvers which they had brought from the revenue cutter.

Three of the Esquimaux fell. The rest faltered. They had no firearms. Jack saw Carson, Sherry and Merryweather fire above the natives' heads to scare them. The ruse succeeded. Picking up two of the wounded, they made a wild dash for the canoes. The white men picked up the third wounded man and Jack saw them giving him some sort of stimulants and examining his injury. It was not serious, for the man was soon

on his feet and apparently imploring the white men not to kill him. The canoes of the others were already putting as great a distance between the island and themselves as possible.

Jack hailed the party below and was soon lowered. His news was a distinct blow to them all. But Uncle Toby took it apathetically. Nothing appeared to disturb him now. Jack asked him for the map, and laid it out on a stone to examine it. It was crudely drawn with a rough picture of the stone chest in one corner.

The Esquimaux, who, it appeared, had not been wounded at all but was merely scared into falling flat on the ground, began jabbering wildly as he saw it. Jack noted that the man's complexion, though dirty, was fairer than he had imagined an Esquimaux's skin would be and then, too, the man's hair was distinctly yellowish in color. He was without doubt one of the famous blonde Esquimaux, the tribe of mystery.

Carson, who could speak the dialect, began put-

ting quick, sharp questions. The man answered, pointing upward at the cedar tree. Carson seemed strangely excited. He turned to Jack.

"You and I and this Esquimaux are going up there to the top of Cedar Mountain," he said.

"Why, does he know anything about the stone chest?" asked Jack, his heart giving a bound.

"He says he does, but he may be lying. We'll give him a chance to prove what he says."

Carson was pulled up first, and then weighted the loop in the rope with a heavy rock and sent it down. Then came the Esquimaux's turn. He was badly frightened but seemed to be under the impression that he would be killed if he didn't go, so consented to be hauled up. Jack went last.

At length they all stood on the summit. The Esquimaux began talking rapidly. He drew a stone hatchet from his skin-clad body and advanced swiftly to the tree. He inserted his hatchet in a crack in the thickest part of the trunk.

Within the trunk Jack caught a glimpse of a large, square box.—*Page* 299

A door was disclosed.

"Great guns! The beggar wasn't lying!" breathed Carson tensely.

Jack peered into the hollow of the trunk. The Esquimaux gave a guttural grunt and pointed. Within the trunk Jack caught a glimpse of a large, square box of some sort. It had metal hinges. The Esquimaux pried it open with his hatchet.

A dull gleam of gold shone from it.

"Uncle Toby was right after all!" cried Jack.

It was the next morning. All the adventurers were bending over a great heap of golden cups, bowls, breastplates, and other articles, beaten by some unknown and long-vanished race from virgin gold. What the pile of precious metal was worth none of them could estimate, for besides the contents of the stone chest, many other valuable articles had been found in the trunk of the tree.

But what gladdened Jack's heart more than the finding of the treasure, was the fact that Uncle Toby, with its discovery, had been restored to his senses. The golden articles were carefully counted and inventoried. Then the Esquimaux was given his liberty in one of the boats, a present which delighted him, and was also presented with a number of knick-knacks with which he told Carson he could buy the richest wife of his tribe.

The pile of gold was carefully covered up with canvas and, curiously enough, it was not till that had been done and an inventory checked up that any of them thought of the momentous question of how they were going to get back to civilization. After a long discussion, it was decided that that night they would take the boat and reconnoiter the schooner. If it was possible to retake her they would, and thus be in a position to dictate terms to Terrill and Company.

During the afternoon Jack set up the wireless apparatus, stringing his aërials from a stout bush

far up the cliff side. Then he began to send messages. He was in the midst of this work when there was a sudden stir in the camp. Three newcomers were approaching down the gulch.

They were Terrill, Jarrow and another of the crew. Terrill looked crestfallen. Jarrow carried a handkerchief tied to a stick as a token of truce.

He noticed the hostile looks cast at him and held up one of his bony-fingered hands deprecatingly.

"I have come in peace," he said in a sanctimonious voice.

"You precious rascal, I'd like to see you go away in pieces," roared Uncle Toby, who was with difficulty restrained from rushing at the oily rascal.

"We all of us make mistakes," muttered Jarrow, rolling his squinting eye horribly. "I'm thinking we all made a big mistake in ever coming here."

"Yes, Captain Ready," said Terrill, "there is

no chance of ever reaching the top of that cedar plateau. The treasure is secure from us both. We will reach an amicable agreement. You give me notes to pay half the expenses of this cruise, and we will sail for home to-day."

Uncle Toby burst into a loud laugh.

"Fer a slick feller, Terrill, you've got yourself inter as nice a corner as ever a man did," he chuckled, "so now, after trying your best to cheat us and leaving us here to starve fer all you know, you try to get me to sign notes for half of a business venture that you went into with your foxy eyes wide open and intendin' to swindle me? I'll see you rot on this island first."

"Confound you!" shrieked Terrill, "it's you that are the swindler. You landed me in this out of the way place. If the treasure is there, it's impossible to get it without an aeroplane."

"You'll go up in ther air yerself in a minute if yer don't watch out," grinned Noddy.

There came a shout from Jack at the wireless.

"I've got the *Thespis*. Hurray!" he cried.

They all, even Terrill and his companions, gazed at the boy in silent concentration.

"They found fragments of the tender and thought we were all lost," he continued. "Captain Simms congratulates us all. He will make full speed for this island at once."

A deep-throated cheer greeted this announcement. All took part in it but Terrill and Carson. Terrill was staring at the seal poacher, whom he had just recognized, as if he had seen a ghost. Carson was the first to find his voice.

"So you know me, Mr. Terrill, eh?" he grated out. "Well, when that United States vessel reaches here, I'm going to tell all I know about that insurance swindle of yours that drove me to be an outlaw."

"Don't dare to threaten me," shrieked Terrill, "you yourself are being sought for as a seal-

poacher. The revenue men will be glad to get you."

Carson made a rush for Terrill, who shrank back terrified, but Sherry and Merryweather held back the maddened sailor with their stout arms.

"I—er—that is, we must be going," stammered Terrill. "Come, Jarrow. Captain Ready, since there is no treasure to be got and we are in the possession of the schooner with a much stronger force for me than you, I hope you will come to terms before to-night."

"Consarn you, I'd die on this desarted island afore I'd come to terms with a rascal of your stripe," shouted Uncle Toby. "There'll be some of Uncle Sam's boys here afore long and they can deal with you."

Terrill turned fairly green at this. Without another word he walked off up the cove, followed by Jarrow and the other man. Three hours later our party of adventurers saw the schooner rounding the point and heading southward.

Terrill had carried out his threat, which they were powerless to check, for they were much the smaller party and the schooner carried guns and rifles. But as the sailing craft wore toward the horizon, a sudden cloud of smoke appeared. Jack sprang to the wireless. In a few seconds he was able to tell them that the smoke heralded the approach of the *Thespis*.

A moment later the *Thespis* was in possession of the facts concerning the larceny of the schooner and was steaming to intercept her. Terrill, of course, did not dare to fight a revenue cutter, and the schooner was turned back to the island. Both craft anchored off the cove about sun down.

There was a joyous reunion between Jack and his officers and the crew, with whom he was a general favorite; Sherry and Merryweather came in for their share of interest and commendation. They sat up late in Captain Simms' cabin telling

their stories, and the gold and plate were transferred to the specie room of the revenue craft.

The news was broken to Terrill the next day by Uncle Toby. For a time it appeared as if the rapacious rascal would go mad. When he had quieted down, Uncle Toby agreed to pay him for the entire expenses of the expedition.

"The rest of the debt I reckon you wiped out yerself," chuckled the old mariner.

"I'll sue you," shrieked Terrill.

"Go ahead. I've got nothing to fear in a court of law. I guess your case is different," replied Uncle Toby imperturbably.

Escorted by the *Thespis,* which had been relieved from iceberg patrol duty for that year, the *Morning Star,* with Terrill a practical prisoner on board, made a quick run back to St. Johns, N. S., the nearest port. Both Terrill and Jarrow vanished soon after landing, and a few days later there was a vacant suite of offices in the building

where Terrill & Co. had once hatched their shady schemes.

The gold plate and relics turned out to be immensely valuable and all concerned in the expedition shared Uncle Toby's generosity, including Noddy Nipper and Pompey. Noddy set up a news stand, which is making good money and Pompey started a colored restaurant where the chocolate-colored élite of New York gather. He never tires of telling them of his adventures, nor do they suffer in the telling.

Captain Carson was "set on his feet" by Uncle Toby, having escaped punishment through the mercy of the authorities. He is now part owner of a fine schooner trading between Boston and the West Indies. Captain Toby was urged by his friends to purchase a conventional residence on his accession to fortune, but he still lives on board the old *Venus*. He says he would not feel at home anywhere else.

As for Jack and Raynor, after a fine time

ashore, with plenty of money to spend after their good luck in the Arctic, they soon began to pine again for active life. To Jack, existence ashore, even with the society of pretty Helen Dennis, began to pall, after the many adventures he had encountered.

But how he gained another step upward toward his ambition in life, and what further experiences lay before him must be saved for the telling in another volume. And here let us leave them, satisfied that in the future all will be well with Uncle Toby's companions in the search for the stone chest, and the hardy members of the Iceberg Patrol.

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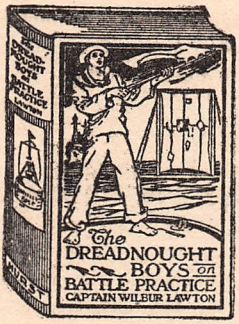

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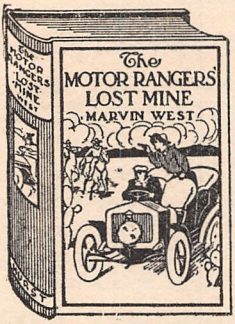

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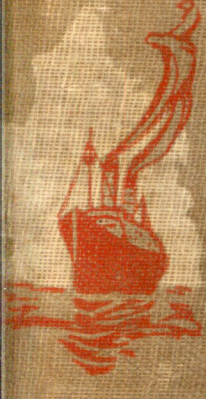

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